# QOHELETH

## New Paraphrase

by

LIONEL E. Z. AARONSON

To Rev J O Kaiser
with Compliments of
Lieut. E. J Harrison
5/17/24

# קֹהֶלֶת

תַּרְגּוּם וּפֵרוּשׁ חָדָשׁ

מאת

זרח אלי' ארי' ב"ר משה אהרן
אהרנסאן

ת ר פ "ד

# QOHELETH

THE RECORD OF THE LECTURE GIVEN BY
THE SON OF DAVID
WHO WAS KING IN JERUSALEM

A new and original translation and paraphrase
of the
BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES
by

LIONEL E. Z. AARONSON

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*Dedicated to My Dearest*

*CYNTHIA THELMA*

She said: "Print it!" I hope, the reader will be gallant enough to forgive her.

L. E. Z. A.

# PREFACE

King Solomon is the author of the lecture through which runs the refrain "Vanity of Vanities" and which is known as the Book of Qoheleth, or Ecclesiastes.

He is the only one who could without bad taste lay claim to "much wisdom" because his wisdom was acknowledged as God-given in the Scriptures: see Kings I.

The Bible also speaks of his great wealth, vast enterprises and luxurious life: see Kings I, also Chronicles II.

The Haggadah still more enlarges upon his wisdom, wealth and power which it claims were subsequently taken from him by Asmodeus, the King of demons, who overpowered him and spat him out in a strange land.

According to the Talmud, Solomon's wisdom was the cause of his undoing. He felt that, since the reasons for the injunction were given in the Bible why the King should not have a large stable, take many wives, and gather much gold, — he was wise enough to enjoy the benefits without the entailed risk. He could have many horses and still not be guilty of causing the Israelites to return to Egypt, that is making an alliance with Egypt; and that the prohibition of many wives, for the reason that they would cause his heart to stray, could not apply to such a strong-willed man as himself; and that the increase of gold and silver would not make him arrogant. (See the Talmud's Paraphrase on Deutronomy, Chapter 17, Paragraph 16 etc.)

In short, he took the position of men of great wealth of the present day, who are heads of great organizations, who strongly favor religious institutions and religious practices in their employees, but consider it superfluous for themselves to observe religious rites, and hold themselves above the Law.

Wise though King Solomon was, he forgot to take into consideration the fact that the life of luxury he was leading would become a burden on the masses of his people, who were heavily

taxed both in money and men to carry on his enterprises and festivities. See Kings I, Chapter 12, Paragraph 4.

His father's warriors also found themselves as no longer necessary in a regime of peace, as his father's formula for economic advancement "לכו פשטו בגדוד" "go ye and form an expedition of conquest" was no longer in practice.

King Solomon's alliance with women of strange countries, the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians and Hittites, could not be met with favor by the intellectual and patriotic classes, and they looked with suspicion at the new cults introduced by those women from their beloved countries, cults which their liberal and tolerant King failed to suppress in his own land.

It was quite noticeable that, when King Solomon observed the ability of one of his subjects Jeroboam the son of Nebat ירבעם בן נבט, his indolent nature freely gave him charge of very important duties heretofore controlled by himself. See Kings I, Chapter 11, Paragraph 28.

It is also natural for a man of low birth, though of great ability, who had suddenly been raised to high estate to feel himself over-important and to imagine that he was great in his own right instead of owing his succes to the generous King that had elevated him.

And when the people murmured because the Convention Place, which was heretofore free for the people to meet in and relate their grievances, was taken away from them and used for the building of a palace for his many wives, and because the direct entrance made by King David, his father, was closed to the pilgrims who would come to worship in Jerusalem at the three great festivals, Jeroboam shirked responsibility and said: "Solomon built up the space for convention and repaired the breaches of the City of David, his father": see Kings I, Chapter 11, Paragraph 27.

He also spoke of both Solomon and David without due reverence to their station as Kings.

In time, the prophets became incensed and Ahijah the Shilonite told Jeroboam that God was not pleased with King Solomon's behavior, but that if he should do what is right in God's eyes and keep His statutes and commandments, he, Jeroboam, would rule over the greater portion of Israel. This resulted in a rebellion of

a majority of Israel; though the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, being near the seat of King Solomon's glory, could not be induced to rebel against him, as they were too near the great wealth accumulated by the King to feel the burden of taxation without reaping some of the benefits, which were denied to the rest of Israel, more remotely removed.

It was then that Jeroboam lifted up his hand against the King. See Kings I, Chapter 11, Paragraph 26.

The rest is veiled in mystery.

It would seem, that for a time he succeeded in turning the hearts of the people against King Solomon: "עמל הכסילים תיגענו" "the efforts of the fools wear him out"; and the Talmud's reference to "מלך והדיוט" — "that he was first a king, then was deposed and became a private citizen" — must relate to some rebellion which resulted in King Solomon's wandering over strange countries, supporting himself by his discourses and vainly crying "אני קהלת הייתי מלך על ישראל בירושלם" — "I the Lecturer *have been* King over Israel in Jerusalem", — bitterly alluding to the cause of his undoing: "and I find that more bitter than death is the woman" — "ומוצא אני מר ממות את האשה"; and, filled with remorse, reproaching himself cried out, "אי לך ארץ שמלכך נער" — "woe to thee, o land whose king is a weakling".

According to the relation of King Solomon's career in Kings I, also Chronicles II, he must have returned to his Kingdom, favoring the assertion of "מלך והדיוט ומלך" — "he reigned as King, then was deposed and became a private citizen" — and subsequently regained his Kingdom.

Though the time of his exile is not definitely referred to, the Scriptures make some reference in the Book of Kings I, Chapter 11, Paragraph 41, to a more detailed history of his life in the "Book of the Acts of Solomon"; and also the Book of Chronicles II, Chapter 9, Paragraph 29, makes reference to the "Book of Nathan the Prophet", and the "Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite" and the "Visions of Iddo the Seer, against Jeroboam the son of Nebat", all of which books are no longer accessible to us, and which might have thrown a light on such a theory.

The Book of Chronicles, jealous for King Solomon's fame, does

not even detract therefrom by reference to the evil that the King did by his many wives and their strange alliances and cults. It would therefore not have been such a surprising thing for such rebellion — if it did occur — not to be mentioned in detail.

One thing is definite as mentioned before: almost all the people, consisting of the masses, the patriotic and intellectual classes, the warriors, the zealots and prophets, were dissatisfied, and there were many causes for such dissatisfaction, of which a self-seeking politician like Jeroboam could have taken advantage; and surely that theory is as convincing as that of Asmodeus, King of Demons given in the Talmud.

I am indebted to Flungian's Book "כרם לשלמה" — "Kerem li-Schlomoh" — for the illuminating theory of Jeroboam's rebellion, and that the Lecture was given in a strange language which was subsequently translated into Hebrew.

In other respects the translation, elaboration and connection is my own work.

From early childhood the Book of "Qoheleth" had a lure for me, but I could not understand it, nor could I find a paraphrase that would satisfy my craving. I then determined to refuse to read anything on the subject and endeavor to find the solution from the text itself.

I believe it was that resolve which made it possible for me to more nearly come to an understanding of the Book than any of my predecessors, who were so learned in tradition and the paraphrases and opinions of authorities, that they became slaves to the generally accepted paraphrase around which a magic circle was drawn, preventing them from leaving the "ד' אמות של הלכה" — "the four cubits that the Law prescribed".

The reader will find my paraphrase of the Book of Qoheleth radically different from any other paraphrase, commentary or translation of that book heretofore made.

I do not hope to find all the author's meaning, his brilliant mind overwhelms me "עמק עמק מי ימצאנו" — "deep, very deep, who can fathom it" —, but if I should succeed in drawing a sparkle from a single facet of the diamond brilliancy of his intellect, I shall have earned the right to publish my own paraphrase.

# INTRODUCTION

The Book of "Ecclesiastes" or "Qoheleth", as it appears in the Holy Bible, should be divided into three parts. Part one consists of Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Chapter 1.

The first Paragraph "דִּבְרֵי קֹהֶלֶת בֶּן־דָּוִד מֶלֶךְ בִּירוּשָׁלָם", "The record of a Lecture (by) the son of David (who was) King in Jerusalem", was written on the back of the Scroll, showing contents.

The second Paragraph "הֶבֶל הֲבָלִים אָמַר קֹהֶלֶת הֲבֶל הֲבָלִים הַכֹּל הָבֶל", "Vanity of Vanities, sayeth the Lecturer, Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity", is the refrain that runs through the Lecture, by which it was identified and which served as the name of the Book. These two Paragraphs were added by the original publishers in the language in which the Lecture was delivered, but were not part of the Lecture itself, though in time they were given as the two opening paragraphs of the first chapter of the Book.

Part two consists of Chapter 1, Paragraph 3 up to and including Chapter 12, Paragraph 7, which is the lecture itself.

Part three consists of the Epilogue, beginning with Chapter 12, Paragraph 8 to the end of the Book.

Paragraph 8 of Chapter 12 "הֶבֶל הֲבָלִים אָמַר הַקֹּהֶלֶת הַכֹּל הָבֶל", "Vanity of Vanities, sayeth the Lecturer, all is Vanity", was in the nature of a review in fragment form (in Hebrew by our sages) of the Book of "Qoheleth", which book they identify by quoting the refrain that runs through it.

It is for this reason that the line reads הקהלת "Ha Qoheleth", "The Qoheleth", which was for the purpose of more explicit identification.

The Epilogue, which was in the nature of an apology and review, was necessary; for there was a serious question as to whether the Book of "Qoheleth" should become part of the Bible, as the Talmud says "בקשו חכמים לגנוז ספר קהלת", "The Sages were in favor of leaving the Book of Qoheleth in oblivion"; and it was only after the Epilogue had

defended the Book in so masterly a manner that it was permitted to become part of the Scriptures.

It must have been so generally known at that time that King Solomon was the author of the Lecture, that the sages did not deem it necessary to refer to him even as "the Son of David, King in Jerusalem". They could not conceive that a question could ever be raised as to the Lecture being given by other than King Solomon.

In Paragraph 9 of Chapter 12 the sages speak of the author and of what he contributed generally to literature and towards the benefit of mankind.

In Paragraph 10 of Chapter 12, they speak of the Book, its purposes, and manner of composition.

In Paragraph 11 of Chapter 12 they warn the reader of the importance of deep and concentrated study of "the words of the wise" and the necessity of assimilating the Book as a whole, instead of subjecting to criticism a statement here and there, as all the different statements are developments of a predominating idea, in which apparent contradictions are ultimately justified and reconciled.

In Paragraph 12 of Chapter 12, they explain the importance of conciseness.

In Paragraph 13 of Chapter 12 they point out the final specific that the reader is looking for, which is "אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים יְרָא וְאֶת־מִצְוֹתָיו שְׁמוֹר" "Fear the Lord and obey His precepts", often hinted at through the Book, ultimately culminating in Paragraph 14 of Chapter 12 "כִּי אֶת־כָּל־מַעֲשֶׂה הָאֱלֹהִים יָבִא בְמִשְׁפָּט עַל כָּל־נֶעְלָם אִם־טוֹב וְאִם־רָע" "Because for all deeds, good or bad, will the Lord bring in judgement in a most mysterious way". Quoting Paragraph 9 of Chapter 11 of the Lecture, which reads "וְדַע כִּי עַל־כָּל־אֵלֶּה יְבִיאֲךָ הָאֱלֹהִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט" "But know that for all of these will the Lord bring thee to account" they add, amplifying the quotation, the words "עַל כָּל־נֶעְלָם אִם־טוֹב וְאִם־רָע" "whether good or bad, in a most mysterious way." There will be both reward and punishment meted out in a manner too mysterious for man to trace as a specific compensation for any specific act.

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Paragraph 3 of Chapter 1 is the beginning of the Lecture.
He begins his Thesis with

„מַה־יִּתְרוֹן לָאָדָם בְּכָל־עֲמָלוֹ שֶׁיַּעֲמֹל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

"What advantage is there to a man with all his efforts that he should strive beneath the sun".

He does not take into consideration in this Lecture any advantage that may accrue beyond the sun, outside of the dimensions of time and space, nor does he take into consideration the advantage obtained from the satisfying of the urge for effort itself, which urge he notices to be universal as "generations come and generations go". Even though no progress is shown. "The Sun rises and the Sun goes down", though its ultimate aim is not demonstrated to us; "the Wind blows" and repeats its operation on the same circuit; "the Streams flow to the Sea". Everything seems a slave to the imperious demand of that mysterious urge, but withholds any manifest purpose.

In the manner of the ancients, the four examples cited by the Lecturer are the four principle divisions or elements. The sun represents אש „Fire", the wind רוח "Air", the streams מים "Water", and the generations of man עפר "Earth".

Everything shows a purposeful effort in spite of its apparent purposeless repetition, and even a thing that appears new is but a development or discovery, to, or by man, which had always existed in the realms of the undiscovered mysteries. It may even have been discovered in the remote past and lapsed again into forgetfulness, and the one that brought the phenomenon to the light of day has long been forgotten, the same as the new discovery may relapse into oblivion and no one will remember the discoverer.

Even the advantage of fame does not have a permanent existence, and the Lecturer adds, „I am a living example of the instability of any advantage I might have attained":

„אֲנִי קֹהֶלֶת הָיִיתִי מֶלֶךְ עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּירוּשָׁלָם"

"I, the Lecturer, *have been* King over Israel in Jerusalem".*

The urge for inquiry took possession of him. It not only proved unprofitable but dispiriting, and he would have ceased further speculation but for the fact that he was confronted by a two-horned dilemma.

* "Qoheleth" often employs more than one synonym in the philosophical discussions of his lecture. In this instance he begins his Thesis with מה־יתרון

„מְעָוֹת לֹא־יוּכַל לִתְקֹן וְחֶסְרוֹן לֹא־יוּכַל לְהִמָּנוֹת"

"The wrong that hath been done cannot be corrected, and what hath been missed cannot be taken into account".

So willy-nilly he must determine and continue his course of action.

So he determined, since "God giveth wisdom to the wise" — „יהב חכמתא לחכימי" — and, "as he was wiser than any that lived before him", there was a duty devolving on him to study the serious as well as the frivolous of the arts and sciences of life.

After doing so in the manner that he will explain later in detail, he found his resolve to have been but an empty thought; for even if wisdom might prove an advantage, it is not sufficiently stable to be a specific and is offset by much vexation in acquiring it; and if knowledge is desirable it can only be at the expense, and as the result, of many painful experiences.

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לאדם בכל עמלו שיעמל תחת הש מש which may be translated in at least the following three ways:

1 "What advantage is there to a man *with* all his efforts, that he should strive beneath the sun" —

besides the advantage of satisfying the urge for the effort itself, what other advantages do his efforts offer?

Or it may be translated:

2 "What endures to man from all his efforts, that he should strive, *beneath the sun*?"

meaning, what remains to man in this mundane existence, in the dimensions of time and space?

Or it may be translated:

3 "What *excellence* to man should he employ in all his efforts beneath the sun", using the word יתרון in the sence of „יתר שאת ויתר עז" — "The excellence of dignity and the excellence of power" (Genesis, Chapter 49, Paragraph 3)

meaning, what specific or formula for life should man employ and aim to attain in his striving? This last form should be slightly transposed in its reading as follows: מה יתרון לאדם שיעמל בכל עמלו תחת השמש

King Solomon employs all of these forms in his Thesis, that I have been able to discover, and perhaps others that I have not been able to fathom.

„כִּי בְּרֹב חָכְמָה רַב־כָּעַס וְיוֹסִיף דַּעַת יוֹסִיף מַכְאוֹב"

"For through much wisdom comes much vexation, and he who gathers knowledge gathers pain".

The Lecturer in the foregoing first Chapter gave a survey of what he afterwards takes up in detail.

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Yielding to the line of least resistance he determined to take all the advantages that pleasure and frivolity offer, but it was „הֶבֶל" — "Vain and Useless" in his case, as meaningless and causeless pleasures appeared too stupid for him to find any joy in them.

„לִשְׂחוֹק אָמַרְתִּי מְהוֹלָל וּלְשִׂמְחָה מַה־זּוֹה עֹשָׂה"

"For laughter, I said, was hilarity, and of joy I said, what causeth it?"

So he schooled himself to many serious and varied occupations, at the same time retaining his sense of humor and endeavoring to obtain the most of life by mastering both folly and wisdom. So he built palaces, planted vineyards, made gardens and orchards, experimented in horticulture and irrigation projects, acquired slaves, a large household retinue, gathered silver and gold and princely treasures, became a patron of music and enjoyed all the delights of men and their companionship in his travels in coaches and large caravan parties, and his wisdom helped him grow and gather successfully, more so than any of his predecessors; and ash is work was varied it kept him interested and saved him from ennui, and he laid no bounds to the gratification of his senses, so as to partake of pleasure and satisfaction to the full. But, Alas! all that remained to him as a reward for his efforts is this:

„וְזֶה־הָיָה חֶלְקִי מִכָּל־עֲמָלִי"

"But, Alas! This remained as my portion from all my possessions,"

pointing to his wandering staff and the Lecture forum.

Even while he still remained in possession of his properties, he found it „הבל ורעות רוח" "unavailable for happiness", in fact a "breaking of the spirit and of no advantage under the sun".

As no one would dare to honestly criticise the work of the King, he was obliged to be his own critic; and he found, "that wisdom hath an

advantage over folly as light hath over darkness", for the wise man may foresee what may happen, while the fool does not know until the event does happen, though neither can prevent the thing from happening.

Because of the latter proposition he found wisdom "הבל" — "Vain and powerless" to save one from the accidents of life, and for the further reason that neither the wise man nor the fool nor their acts will be remembered; that in time oblivion will cover all, and that to death must also be added oblivion.

He began to hate life on account of the "הבל" — "Vanity and uselessness of it all", and for the reason that property itself may have no stability, as he will not always be there to be able to care for his possessions which he had so painfully acquired. He began to hate his possessions and despair of developing them to their greatest efficiency, because he realized that "one may acquire and develop his property through wisdom, knowledge and skill, and be obliged to relinquish his hold on them" to one that may not possess the qualities necessary to retain them. Therefore this also is "Vanity and a great evil" — "הבל ורעה רבה". It is vanity, because the sleepless nights and the incessant work in acquiring them were useless and for naught; "and a great evil" because a wrong had been done him in wresting his property from him, for since he had toiled therein, Justice demands that he partake of its benefits instead of arbitrarily wresting it from him "who missed God's favor" and giving it to someone else whom God does favor. This is especially "רעות רוח" "a breaking of the spirit" when he contemplates how everything was taken from him and given over to a man both undeserving and incompetent, and who is the favored of God, while he himself had missed God's favor to the extent that he was given the urge to gather and amass, that his enemy should enjoy the fruits.

This ends the second Chapter.

The third Chapter begins by the Lecturer feeling that possibly he had overemphasised his successor's having met with God's favor and himself having missed God's favor. In short, he had overestimated his own importance in believing that he was singled out for misfortune; because it all may have been a trick of fate, that preordains for each what should happen at certain seasons when he must perform his one or several acts as scheduled; and circumstances govern, circumstances of a general potency and influence which affect everybody at certain periods, influence and limit man's fortune and efforts, even in his volitional periods — as, for instance, the following circumstances, the examples of which are here reduced to current history for purposes of elucidation.

„עֵת לָלֶדֶת וְעֵת לָמוּת"

"A time to be born and a time to die".

From the moment of birth, death begins. Also the normal laws governing man are suspended when the phenomenon of birth takes place. The laws of modesty cannot inhibit a woman, when she gives birth to a child. The severe pains of childbirth force the cry of agony to escape the lips of one who is normally undemonstrative and repressive.

New considerations must be given the new heir.

Different passions, greed and love predominate, which were dormant heretofore.

Policies of state may change. Statesmen rise and fall and laws may be revised to meet the new situation.

These are also true in a "Time to die". The king is dead: Long live the king.

„עֵת לָטַעַת וְעֵת לַעֲקוֹר נָטוּעַ"

"A time to plant and a time to uproot what has been planted".

Emigration and immigration may become the order of the day. Invasions may cause it. A local cataclysm may create a general movement, economic conditions may favor it, discoveries of new countries and settlements and developments of natural resources may promote it. Man's inhumanity to man may force it. Should such a thing happen it cannot but affect the existing order of things. Ties will be broken, new ties and attachments will be made, values will change to abnormal and subnormal, ethics will take a different course: whereas grab and importunity is despised in a settled civilization, it is among the greatest virtues in new settlements. „חֲטוֹף וְאֱכוֹל חֲטוֹף וּשְׁתֵה" — "Grab and eat, grab and drink". — The law of the survival of the fittest rules. "Push" is lauded, while the qualities of modesty and natural reserve will militate against the possessor of these qualities.

„עֵת לַהֲרוֹג וְעֵת לִרְפּוֹא"

"A time to kill and a time to cure".

Self-defence may even make killing permissible; and curing a people from a Sadism that was induced by legally shedding blood may and must in time take its place to save the world or that people from becoming permanent victims of sadistic and masochistic insanity.

„עֵת לִפְרוֹץ וְעֵת לִבְנוֹת"

"A time to make a breach and a time to build".

Nations will sever diplomatic relations and create new alliances.

„עֵת לִבְכּוֹת וְעֵת לִשְׂחוֹק"

"A time to weep and a time to laugh".

When such things occur, weeping will be indulged in by the owners of normal enterprises who foresee their impending ruin; while joy will be expressed by the promoters of that friction who foresee advantages to be gained by profiteering.

„עֵת סְפוֹד וְעֵת רְקוֹד"

"A time to mourn and a time to dance".

It foretells what will ultimately happen, and a hysteria of mourning and Jazz takes place.

„עֵת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ אֲבָנִים וְעֵת כְּנוֹס אֲבָנִים"

"A time to cast away children and a time to gather children".

Songs like "I did not raise my boy to be a soldier" become unpopular. Conscription becomes the order of the day, which is followed by a narrow selfish nationalism, military organizations, and even by a restricted Klanishness.

And translating אֲבָנִים as stones or money: Money will be squandered in enormous sums for purposes of preparedness. Credits will become over extended. The Government banks will lend to the private banks without restrictions, capital issues will be favored by the government, trusts will dispose of their excess stocks at enormous profits. Labor will be overpaid and simultaneously robbed through high and exhorbitant prices. The horn of plenty will be filled in the wide end to the very brim and, though the end of the horn is small, it will flow in a steady stream, and Prosperity will be King.

When the people will have been relieved of their excess profits through taxations and the trusts will have disposed of their surplus stocks, when stocks and bonds of every character will have been disposed of at the highest prices, when Labor will have had a surfeit of phonographs, musical instruments, jewelry and silk shirts for which they paid outrageous and exorbitant sums, a new Idol will be created „עֵת כְּנוֹס אֲבָנִים" — "A time to gather money". — A general deflation will take place. Holy and mystic names will assume potency, and such abracadabra as inflation, deflation and liquidation will be devoutly invoked. Merchants will find their loans called in spite of the promises of their bankers. They will be turned upside down and their excess funds will be shaken from them. Failures will increase in great numbers. The private bankers, on account of the restriction of credits and high discount rates of the government bank, will be in

terror of their liberty, being doubtful of their ability to continue their banks through the enforced liquidation and the evaluing of securities. To prevent outsiders buying the bargains in securities and bonds, margins will be wiped out and money will not be available. The government will pride itself on its clever scheme to regain its own Liberty Bonds below par, in some cases even as low as at 85, and financiers will be able to pick up bargains. The government banks for the purpose of still further enforcing liquidation will scrutinize all securities to the extent of refusing to accept Liberty Bonds as collateral; and when the poor washer woman (who has lost her husband in the war and whose son has returned maimed) whose patriotism has induced her to spend her only hundred dollars on Liberty Bonds, on the assurance of her banker that it will be worth 110 and that she can always borrow at par on it, when she goes to the local banker, he will say sadly, that he cannot lend her on the bonds as collateral, but that she must sell them at a loss.

The private banker was forced to do so, because the edict went forth that liquidation was the order of the day, and the financial papers still made note of the fact that liquidation was slow (because the people still held on to their Liberty Bonds) and that it was important to reduce Labor to the necessity of accepting lower wages and modifying its extravagant mode of living (because the stocks of the Trusts had to be replenished).

„עֵת לַחֲבוֹק וְעֵת לִרְחֹק מֵחַבֵּק"

"A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing".

A time when white men and colored men, Catholics, Protestants and Jews were embracing each other and recognized no difference in race, color or creed, when all worked for the single purpose of protecting and defending the State. But later a time for a spirit of hate to be promulgated, and a war of creed against creed, race against race be declared.

„עֵת לְבַקֵּשׁ וְעֵת לְאַבֵּד"

"A time to search and a time to destroy".

For the purpose of preventing a universal investigation of the patriots (for revenue only), who have ostensibly given up their all for the country, but who are left with a neat little balance.

And just as the Roman government found it necessary to save itself by throwing Christians to lions, our financiers find it necessary to keep the people away from the real issues, and the real criminals, by giving them Negroes, Catholics and Jews as victims to be destroyed by boycott, lynched and tarred and feathered.

„עֵת לִשְׁמוֹר וְעֵת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ"

"A time to guard and a time to abandon".

After election the government guarded those preachers of the religion of hate, but before the new election they will abandon them to their fate.

„עֵת לִקְרוֹעַ וְעֵת לִתְפּוֹר"

"A time to tear and a time to sew".

It *was* necessary to make that division then, but it *will be* necessary to obtain the vote of the Negroes, Catholics and Jews at the new election.

„עֵת לַחֲשׁוֹת וְעֵת לְדַבֵּר"

"A time to keep silent and a time to speak".

Free speech was condemned and punished, but the principles of our Constitution must prevail.

„עֵת לֶאֱהֹב וְעֵת לִשְׂנֹא"

"A time to love and a time to hate".

A time when ostentatious patriotism is admired, though it was heretofore held in suspicion. And a time when love and reverence for one's country should and must be enforced as was done in the case of a father beating a five years old child with a strap and yelling, "I'll make you love me, I'll make you love me".

„עֵת מִלְחָמָה וְעֵת שָׁלוֹם"

"A time for war and a time for peace".

All of these abnormalities were the outcome of war which had destroyed the equilibrium of the normal laws of peace time.

And since there is a preordained season for each one, and he must carry out the limited prescribed purpose he was born for, with or without his volition; and since there is a fixed and immovable condition or circumstance that affects everybody even in his volitional acts, at certain times, that has an overpowering influence on the individual, —

„מַה־יִּתְרוֹן הָעוֹשֶׂה בַּאֲשֶׁר הוּא עָמֵל"

"What doth the worker gain, by the reason of his labor".

He noticed the potency of the unprofitable urge; and yet it cannot be entirely purposeless, for everything that happens is the best that should, or could, have happened; if one takes in consideration every fact and circumstance and man's limited deserts for a better condition. From man's own standpoint, and for his own benefit, was even the event and its con-

sequences kept from him. He therefore also instinctively feels that the best specific for a conduct of life is "to be happy and to live his life as profitably as possible". Though he also knows that it is not of man's choosing, but that such a disposition is a gift of God.

He also felt that life, such as it is, cannot be improved upon, because God has ordained it so; and though everything appears an empty repetition, it is the Almighty God that has ordered it so, and the urge that actuates the man, the sun, the wind and the sea to project themselves into the future, though inexplicable to us, must have a purpose determined by Him.

„וְהָאֱלֹהִים יְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת נִרְדָּף"

"It is the Lord that searches for the thing in pursuit" (the future).

And as he also noticed that, since this world is remarkable in its harmony — „כי עת לכל חפץ" — "That there is a proper time for every purpose", — Justice must also have its place in the great Beyond, somewhere, if it is denied its place here. „את הצדיק ואתהרשע ישפוט האלהים שם": — "The just and the wicked will the Lord judge yonder".

Also because circumstances at prescribed periods have an overpowering influence on man even in his volitional state — כי עת לכל חפץ: since there is a fixed time for everything, and since all volition is taken from him in the act or acts he is foredoomed to perform; „ועל כל המעשה" — "and for all (predestined) acts", — human justice must fail to render a proper verdict, and perforce „את הצדיק ואת הרשע ישפוט האלהים שם" — "the righteous and the wicked will the Lord judge in the great Beyond".

These were his convictions; and when he took the position of philosophising about God's ways, he took the agnostic manner of arguing that, since man and beast are subject to the same phenomenon of death, there is no difference in their spirit of life or soul. In short

„וְלִרְאוֹת שֶׁהֵם־בְּהֵמָה הֵמָּה לָהֶם"

"And to conceive (the idea) that themselves are beasts, they are (properly compared) to them".

In other words: whether he takes the position that everything that is, is right, and God knows the purpose of everything, and though there is no dependence on human justice, God will make everything right and the spirit of man will receive its deserts in the great Beyond; or whether he takes the agnostic form of reasoning that there is no survival of the human spirit; — in any case nothing can be lost by man taking as a specific for his conduct of life כי אין טוב מאשר ישמח האדם במעשיו כי הוא חלקו:

"That there is nothing better than that man should be happy with his work, whatever be his lot".

This ends Chapter three.

He thereupon determined to be happy; but when he saw the world filled with injustice and misery,

"וְשַׁבְתִּי אֲנִי וָאֶרְאֶה אֶת כָּל הָעֲשֻׁקִים אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשִׂים תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְהִנֵּה דִמְעַת הָעֲשֻׁקִים וְאֵין לָהֶם מְנַחֵם וּמִיַּד עֹשְׁקֵיהֶם כֹּחַ וְאֵין לָהֶם מְנַחֵם"

"And I retraced (my steps from my determination to lead a happy carefree existence) when I saw all the persecutions that were being perpetrated under the sun and beheld the tears of the persecuted, and there is none to comfort them, nor (is there) any power (to save them) from the hands of their persecutors, and there is none to comfort them".

And he preferred to be among the dead who are saved the dread of such misfortune happening to them, and would that he had never existed that he might save himself the sight of such injustice and misery, especially when he saw that the championing of the unfortunates was only actuated by a desire to show off before one's neighbor and to exploit them. When he saw all that, his joy was taken from him.

And when he himself determined to champion the cause of the persecuted, what did he find?

"הַכְּסִיל חֹבֵק אֶת־יָדָיו וְאֹכֵל אֶת־בְּשָׂרוֹ"

"The fool folds his hands and permits his flesh to be destroyed".

He makes no effort to help himself, refuses to do anything to better his condition, and would not risk the loss of his present position, though it is painful and intolerable, for the possible gain of relief by struggling and freeing himself from his present misery, but keeps himself as a dead weight for the one that would help and release him from his situation.

So he retraced his steps from that and again determined to continue his work and find happiness therein, but on close analysis he found a discouraging case where the urge for continued effort took possession of a certain person (whose case he cites) which was like a disease and an obsession. He was alone, had neither son nor brother, was very successful, but never satisfied with the wealth he gathered. Should he not have asked himself: "For whom do I gather this wealth whilst I deny myself from its benefits?" "Why do I not take a partner or a wife to double my

pleasures and divide my sorrows? and if I should have a son how much more impregnable would my position be."

Whilst the Lecturer was thinking of the child, he breaks in on his thoughts (which he resumes in Paragraph 12, Chapter 5) and he points out the advantage of the helpless child, who has just left the prison of his mothers womb, to reign and become a factor in life, and how the world will be in sympathy with him, and they will forget the old king and fool when the direst poverty will have overmastered him in his reign, which is, his utter helplessness.

But his joy in the child also proved vanity, for he realized that the child must travel the same road as his predecessors and will also be forgotten. Youth will turn into age, disintegration and even oblivion.

He again faces an impasse, and as he had previously declared that a man's efforts do not secure him against the accidents of life, and that though one may decide to be happy he must come to God's favor to deserve it, as it is purely a gift of God, he recommends the way one should endeavor to obtain God's favor when he goeth to the house of God.

„שְׁמֹר רַגְלְךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ אֶל־בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים"

"Watch thy step as thou goest to the house of God".

Lead an innocent life and be ready to heed the Lord's command. It is more agreeable to Him, —

„מִתֵּת הַכְּסִילִים זָבַח"

"Than the offerings by, and the sacrifices of, the fools"

or sinners, to propitiate Him for sins committed. He therefore recommends: "Do not be impetuous with thy vows, but if thou didst vow, pay it, because thou wouldst simply add to thy iniquity, and thy impetuous vow as well as thy useless protest will not save thee from having thy vow collected by law, by a forced sale of thy possessions to make good thy vow. Much better would it have been for thee, hadst thou never made a vow; besides, nothing has been gained by it. Everybody will recognize thee as a fool".

„כִּי בָּא הַחֲלוֹם בְּרֹב עִנְיָן וְקוֹל כְּסִיל בְּרֹב דְּבָרִים"

"For as the dream cometh with many (irrelevant) thoughts, thus is the voice of the fool (heard) through much (irrelevant) speech".

How much better would it have been if thou never hadst made the vow and that thou wouldst watch thy steps, and be circumspect and lead

an innocent life, so that no sacrifices would be required from thee; and do not make offers or vows which thou dost not intend to make good.

This ends Paragraph 6 Chapter 5.

The Lecturer now goes back to the thought of the unfortunate whom he desired to help, but could not help one who refused to help himself (referred to in Paragraphs 5 and 6 of Chapter 4) and whom he left in a hopeless situation. It is especially fitting here after he expressed the thought that there is a God whom one should endeavor to please, but whose justice does not seem to manifest itself. Because, after all, this thing is sure, there is one that is being persecuted and there is a persecutor, and though the Lecturer may become impatient with him because the persecuted one does nothing to help himself, God's justice cannot take refuge in such an answer, but, he avers, "God must surely know and recompense".

And, —

„אִם־עֹשֶׁק רָשׁ וְגֵזֶל מִשְׁפָּט וָצֶדֶק תִּרְאֶה בַּמְּדִינָה אַל־תִּתְמַהּ עַל הַחֵפֶץ כִּי גָבֹהַּ
מֵעַל גָּבֹהַּ שֹׁמֵר וּגְבֹהִים עֲלֵיהֶם"

"Shouldst thou see in the province persecutions of the poor and the corruption of judgement and Justice, do not be surprised at the incident, for the Highest One over all the high ones keeps guard and there are higher ones over them"

for over the high ones there are higher ones, and the Highest one over all keeps supreme guard.

God keeps watch and delegates his protection and retribution to be meted out, by people or circumstances that are higher and more powerful than the persecutors or corrupt justices; besides, one should not judge by appearances, no one condition in life is all advantages, nor is there such a condition that is so utterly bad that it has not its corresponding advantage. Take for example the King, the very highest symbol of immunity from want: he is nevertheless a slave to the field for the production of his food; or when the King is made to servre in the field of battle he must assume the responsibility of his position as well as its glories. Or take the desire for wealth. What use is it, if it cannot be satisfied; and if one craves the plaudits of the populace, as applause cannot be controlled, such an obsession is a disadvantage. Or when one has amassed great wealth and controls great industries, the employees of the great organizations, necessary to maintain them, will enjoy of that property as much as the real owner, who will only exceed the benefits earned by the employees of his organization by the consciousness of ownership and the sight of his eyes.

On the contrary, his laborers will obtain more benefit from it than the rich owner. They will enjoy the refreshing sleep earned through labor, while the surfeit, cares and responsibility will not permit the owner to sleep.

Going back to the case that he had cited in Paragraph 8 Chapter 4, of one whose continued effort was like a disease or obsession for wealth that he could not enjoy, he continues, in Paragraph 12 Chapter 5, to cite other cases, when he notices:

„עֹשֶׁר שָׁמוּר לִבְעָלָיו לְרָעָתוֹ"

"Where wealth is saved for its owners injury".

One case was of one who did not enjoy his wealth when he had it, but saved it for a time of necessity, congratulated himself that the wealth will belong to his son, who will be saved the struggles he went through to acquire it; just then poor business overtook him, he lost his wealth and the son finds himself "as naked as when he left his mother's womb". Such a condition is worse than if the son had fitted himself for the struggles of life without depending on his father's wealth. He also reflects on the instability of his wealth, which was utterly lost, and all his toiling to acquire it was for naught, which is a disease inherent in wealth itself.

From which awful example he determines as follows: Is it not best, therefore, not to prepare for nor worry about the future?

„אֲשֶׁר יָפֶה לֶאֱכוֹל וְלִשְׁתּוֹת וְלִרְאוֹת טוֹבָה בְּכָל עֲמָלוֹ שֶׁיַּעֲמֹל תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ
מִסְפַּר יְמֵי חַיָּיו אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי הוּא חֶלְקוֹ"

"That it is proper to eat and drink and experience the benefits for all his toil, that he hath worked the numbered days of his life that God hath given him under the sun, provided such be his portion".

"He also noticed that to every man that God hath given wealth and property and permitted him to eat therefrom and to carry away his portion and to be happy with his work, that that is a gift of God", but is not of man's choosing.

Excepting that everybody does not seem to realize this fact; many forget the evanescence of wealth and few realize that they have God to thank, for the privilege as well as the capacity of enjoying it.

He continues his reflections, citing more cases of wealth and its instability which "comes in many forms over man".

One case is where one had all the means of enjoyment "but the Lord doth not empower him to eat therefrom, but a strange man eats therefrom".

„זֶה הֶבֶל וְחֳלִי רָע הוּא"

"This is Vanity and an evil disease".

"This is vanity" because the wealth becomes unavailable to him; "and an evil disease" because added to the loss is the sense of injustice and the rancor of it.

Another case, of one who, besides possessing the means of enjoyment, had a voracious unsatisfying desire for more wealth and more glory, which prevents him from enjoying his *present moments of happiness,* but he continually looks for the acquirement of more wealth and more glory and the gratification of pleasures not yet gratified. Such a one, as long as he lives and until he will have been buried, is in a worse plight "than the still-born child, who arrived in vanity, passes away in darkness and whose name the darkness will cover, who did not see the sun and could not distinguish the satisfaction to be derived to this from that".

Or another case, where one had a long life and saw neither improvement nor development therein: he is like unto the still-born child and will go to the same oblivion. What use did he make of his long life and what benefits did he derive therefrom?

But all of that is a matter of temperament.

„כָּל־עֲמַל הָאָדָם לְפִיהוּ"

"All the effort of man is according to the individual".

Each man's individual temperament determines his efforts.

„וְגַם־הַנֶּפֶשׁ לֹא תִמָּלֵא"

"Nor can desire be satisfied"

but that does not satisfy even himself.

And since man's temperament is beyond his control, what advantage has the wise man over the fool? What should the wretch know to enable him to go against the forces that oppose him in life?

The best one may do with his wisdom, is to gather the wealth — which his organization will consume, leaving the owner but "the sight of his eyes" — the sense of ownership and privilege of looking after it. He must become a slave to it or lose it through self indulgence.

Besides, what can the wretch know, and what can he do, to oppose the forces of the noumena, of things and sentiments that have been brought in existence and named in the remote past by the first individual that experienced them; and which acts as a powerful inhibition to the one who arriv-

ed so much later in life. Even his feelings are influenced by concepts given by the first who felt, named, and described them.

Besides, there are so many circumstances that add to the truth of his saying "Everything is vanity".

How can he find the specific for life, which passes away "like a shadow"? His life is short and fleeting and he does not know how to dispose of it. Nor is there one who will tell him what will become of him after he will have left this life.

Finding that man is helpless to control his fate, he concludes that —

„טוֹב שֵׁם מִשֶּׁמֶן טוֹב וְיוֹם הַמָּוֶת מִיּוֹם הִוָּלְדוֹ"

"Better the name than the good oil, and the day of death than the day of his birth".

The name that one leaves behind him at death, is better than the good oil that he was anointed with at birth.

And as he could find no specific for life by studying its frivolous side, he thought he would look for it by the study of its serious side; and he found that

„טוֹב לָלֶכֶת אֶל־בֵּית־אֵבֶל מִלֶּכֶת אֶל־בֵּית מִשְׁתֶּה בַּאֲשֶׁר הוּא סוֹף כָּל־הָאָדָם
וְהַחַי יִתֵּן אֶל־לִבּוֹ"

"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, since it is the end of man, and the living will take it to heart".

He found that

„טוֹב כַּעַס מִשְּׂחוֹק כִּי־בְרַע פָּנִים יִיטַב לֵב"

"Seriousness is better than frivolity, for through the sad face is the heart improved".

He found that only the fool can find satisfaction in carefree pleasure; but he who reflects finds more satisfaction in serious contemplation and prefers to be admonished by the wise man than to be applauded by the fools, who laugh and reck not that their days are fleeting aimlessly.

From all of which he would conclude that wisdom is the specific, but on close analysis he finds that

„כִּי הָעֹשֶׁק יְהוֹלֵל חָכָם וְיאַבֵּד אֶת־לֵב מַתָּנָה"

"Troubles make the wise man mad and cause him to lose the giftēd heart"

or mind; persecution causes the wise to lose their mental equilibrium.

The Lecturer at Paragraph 7 of Chapter 7 finds himself still without a specific for a rule for life, even when he contemplates life from its serious aspect; because oppression and bereavement cause the wise man to lose his gifted mind.

★

Finding himself at the house of mourning, the Lecturer makes several observations pertinent thereto.

„טוֹב אַחֲרִית דָּבָר מֵרֵאשִׁיתוֹ"

"The end of a thing is better than its beginning".

It is better to find oneself at the end of life than to face life's burden from the beginning.

„טוֹב אֶרֶךְ־רוּחַ מִגְּבַהּ רוּחַ"

"A patient spirit is better than a proud spirit".

It is better to submit to the inevitable than to struggle fruitlessly.

Avoid anger: it is a proper attribute of fools.

Have no vain regrets for the past.

The present bereavement may prove a blessing.

The survivors may benefit by it through inheritance.

It may result in thy being able to develop thy wisdom without the worry of thy economic question.

Behold! this bereavement is God's work. And even if it appears wrong to thee, it must be right and cannot be improved upon.

Every thing and every condition is evenly balanced, nothing is all good or all bad and no one's life is all good or all bad. Therefore when good abounds, enjoy it, but have in mind the evil day that may come. If thou wilt do so, thou wilt not be able to upbraid thyself for lack of circumspection.

He had often heard the cry in the house of bereavement about the injustice of fate, how a just man is destroyed for his justice and how a wicked man carries on in his wickedness, and he would answer:

Be not overjust, by exaggerating thy goodness, and do not make thyself appear overwise, by talking meaningless platitudes; and do not believe that

because it often appears that the wicked carry on in their wickedness that it is profitable to be wicked, because if thou shouldst decide on a course so foolish, thou art liable to die before thy allotted time.

Keep an open mind and keep thyself ready to meet any condition in life with forbearance and intelligence.

Intelligence can be of more assistance to thee than all thy physical resources.

Even an untimely death may be as a punishment for a sin committed unknown to thee, or in order to save him from committing a grievous sin.

Be not impatient with the bereaved and do not heed their insults, any more than thou wouldst heed the insults of thy slaves, because very often thou thyself didst not choose thy words when thou wert in trouble.

And still, the Lecturer did not find a specific for the conduct of life neither by employing wisdom for the study of the frivolous, nor did the study of the serious aspects of life find the solution; and he despairingly cries:

„רָחוֹק מַה־שֶּׁהָיָה וְעָמֹק עָמֹק מִי יִמְצָאֶנּוּ"

"Far is the thing that has been (how can I understand it), and deep (very) deep (is the thing that will be), who can fathom it?"

He could not read the past, nor could he grasp the future; and wisdom failed to teach him the proper course one should follow in life. He changed his tactics, and as he could not find a positive rule for life which he should follow, he at least wished to know what course to avoid.

„וְלָדַעַת רֶשַׁע כֶּסֶל וְהַסְּכְלוּת הוֹלֵלוֹת"

"Which evil is the most foolish and which hilarity is the most stupid".

So looking back into his past life he wanted to know what particular folly brought him to his present state, where he lost his kingdom, was stripped of his wealth and forced to eke out a precarious existence in exile, away from his kith and kin.

He found that his misfortune was caused by women, who kept him manacled and helpless and caused him to commit the errors that brought him to his present condition, which is more bitter than death. And, growing bitter, Qoheleth often used to repeat this statement: he would count his wives by name, untill he would complete the sum of seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines and name the fault in each one of them:

„אֲשֶׁר עוֹד־בִּקְשָׁה נַפְשִׁי וְלֹא מָצָאתִי אָדָם אֶחָד מֵאֶלֶף מָצָאתִי וְאִשָּׁה
בְּכָל־אֵלֶּה לֹא מָצָאתִי"

"And what my soul is still craving for, but has not yet found, one man in a thousand have I found, but (the single case of) a woman in all those (I enumerated) have I not found".

He still is not free from the hope and desire of finding the one true woman, whom he could not find in the entire thousand he was already intimate with.

He had, however, found one perfect man in a thousand, probably referring to בניהו בן יהוידע Benayahu the son of Jehoyada and others like him.

„לְבַד רְאֵה־זֶה מָצָאתִי אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם יָשָׁר וְהֵמָּה בִקְּשׁוּ
חִשְׁבֹנוֹת רַבִּים"

"Excepting, behold, this have I found, that *the Lord* hath made the (one) perfect man (in a thousand), but they (the other nine hundred and ninety nine) were required to (swell) the great numbers" (to make up the thousand).

That perfect man was surely God-made. He represents quality, the others represent bulk, mass or quantity, necessary to make up the thousand.

Musing on the God-made Superman made perfect, he believes that it was wisdom that distinguished him from the mass. The Divine light of "wisdom causes his face to become radiant and refines the coarseness of his features".

Having found that wisdom is a desirable quality, he asks what are the pre-requisites for the acquiring of wisdom; and he answers, that the first and foremost quality and training necessary for the acquiring of wisdom is discipline.

„אֲנִי פִּי־מֶלֶךְ שְׁמֹר"

"I obey the edicts of the king".

Though I am the king I must obey my own edicts.

„וְעַל דִּבְרַת שְׁבוּעַת אֱלֹהִים אַל־תִּבָּהֵל מִפָּנָיו תֵּלֵךְ אַל־תַּעֲמֹד בְּדָבָר רָע כִּי
כָּל־אֲשֶׁר יַחְפֹּץ יַעֲשֶׂה"

"And regarding the allegiance due to God: do not impetuously rush to do an evil deed, depart from it, do not waver, for all that He desires will be accomplished".

How much more shouldst thou discipline thyself in the allegiance due to thy God who can accomplish all He desires, more so than the mortal king.

Do not follow thy impulse for evil, on the contrary take the opposite direction, flee from it, do not waver, for since human laws rule, who can oppose God's will.

If thou wilt obey God's laws and follow his precepts thou wilt be saved from evil experiences. The wise man knows that since the world was harmoniously created Justice must rule, and that sentence for evil committed must follow under retributive circumstances when the time for retribution becomes ripe, and at some point the time for sentence and the sentence itself will meet.

But when retribution does come, the sinner does not know that it is a sentence for a wrong act committed by him; and no one will point out that fact to him.

Retribution may come in many forms.

The difficulty of man to master himself may lead to his undoing. Surely death cannot be controlled. Everyman must fight his own battle of life, and the accumulation of wealth through an evil life will not save its possessor.

These reflections were made by him when he considered how man rules over another and exploits him. Justice must rule to keep in harmony with a harmonious world.

Compensation and retribution must take place as a pure act of justice.

And though he felt convinced that these reflections were true he found numerous contradictions. "In fact he saw wicked people steeped in their wickedness, who have entirely departed from their holy state, who come to the city and are found living as peaceful a life as if they had acted properly".

And though he believes that there will be retribution meted out to them somewhere, sometime, somehow, yet, because of the fact that the punishment does not immediately follow the crime, man is prone to believe there will be no punishment.

"עַל־כֵּן מָלֵא לֵב בְּנֵי־הָאָדָם בָּהֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת רָע"

"For that reason does the heart of the sons of man dare to do wrong".

"Because a sinner may commit a hundred sins and punishment is delayed him; even though", says the Lecturer, "I know that good will come

to those who have respect for God and His laws, and good will not happen to the wicked nor will he have a long and happy life; but he will pass away like a shadow" forgotten by all as if he had never existed.

But it appears an awful fault in the administration of Justice —

„אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ צַדִּיקִים אֲשֶׁר מַגִּיעַ אֲלֵהֶם כְּמַעֲשֵׂה הָרְשָׁעִים וְיֵשׁ רְשָׁעִים שֶׁמַּגִּיעַ אֲלֵהֶם כְּמַעֲשֵׂה הַצַּדִּיקִם"

"That there are just men to whom is meted out as for the deeds of evil men, and there are evil men to whom is meted out as for the deeds of just men".

One may be evil and does not suffer even in his reputation. One may be good and suffers as if he committed evil, even in the eyes of public opinion.

So he came to the conclusion that the pursuit of happiness is the one thing to look forward to, because the search for wisdom did not bring him to the hoped-for goal, for the specific, for a positive course of life.

How he toiled day and night for the acquiring of knowledge and wisdom, to perceive the motive force of everything; and he found it impossible for man to grasp all the works that are being done under the sun; no matter how much he applied himself to his task, he could not discover it, and he concluded that *it was all the works of the Lord,* and it is impossible for man, no matter how wise he may be, to fathom them.

„כִּי אֶת־כָּל־זֶה נָתַתִּי אֶל־לִבִּי וְלָבוּר אֶת־כָּל־זֶה אֲשֶׁר הַצַּדִּיקִים וְהַחֲכָמִים וַעֲבָדֵיהֶם בְּיַד הָאֱלֹהִים גַּם־אַהֲבָה גַם־שִׂנְאָה אֵין יוֹדֵעַ הָאָדָם הַכֹּל לְפָנֵיהֶם"

"For all of that have I given over to my heart, also to clarify all of this, that the just and the wise and their services are in the power of the Lord, even Love, even Hate; man does not experience (volitionally), everything is placed before them".

A Moses may change the history of the world at one time, but the services of a Moses may be utterly inefficient at another. He vainly endeavored to reconcile the inexplicable. He noticed how the best people were deprived of their volition. Everything, even the value of their services to the community, is placed before them. Even such an abstract feeling as love or hate, a man does not experience of his own volition, but he loves or hates whether he wills it or not.

„הַכֹּל כַּאֲשֶׁר לַכֹּל מִקְרֶה אֶחָד לַצַּדִּיק וְלָרָשָׁע"

"Everything is as if it were for everybody, the one accident happens to the righteous and to the wicked".

Everything appears haphazard.

Which seems to be a serious defect in the governing of the world, that the one event may happen to all, besides the other defect that he mentioned of delayed retribution, as it has the effect of making men sinful, since there appears to be no discrimination; and they become filled with despair and madness when they contemplate their lives; and when they contemplate themselves in death, they find no relief; in fact, it is even worse.

„כִּי־מִי אֲשֶׁר יֻחְבַּר אֶל כָּל־הַחַיִּים יֵשׁ בְּטָחוֹן כִּי־לְכֶלֶב חַי הוּא טוֹב מִן־הָאַרְיֵה הַמֵּת"

"For he who is still connected with all the living, has the conviction, that the live dog fares better than the dead lion".

Thou art still an actor in the Drama of Life, while the curtain has been rung down on even the one who heretofore played the major part.

„כִּי הַחַיִּים יוֹדְעִים שֶׁיָּמֻתוּ וְהַמֵּתִים אֵינָם יוֹדְעִים מְאוּמָה וְאֵין־עוֹד לָהֶם שָׂכָר כִּי נִשְׁכַּח זִכְרָם"

"For the living have at least the knowledge that they will die, while the dead do not know anything, nor can they acquire reward, since their record has become forgotten".

„גַּם אַהֲבָתָם גַּם־שִׂנְאָתָם גַּם־קִנְאָתָם כְּבָר אָבָדָה וְחֵלֶק אֵין־לָהֶם עוֹד לְעוֹלָם בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־נַעֲשָׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

"Even their loves, even their hates, even their zeal have already been lost; and forever will they have no longer any share in what is happening under the sun".

Death assuredly seems no refuge; for there seems to be a conviction that a petty life is better than none.

We must therefore go back to the contemplation of the living, and he concludes that the best advice he can give is:

„לֵךְ אֱכֹל בְּשִׂמְחָה לַחְמֶךָ וּשְׁתֵה בְלֵב־טוֹב יֵינֶךָ כִּי כְבָר רָצָה
הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ"

"Go! Eat thy bread with joy and drink thy wine with a happy heart. For from time remote hath the Lord willed thy deed".

From time remote hath the Lord appointed thee to live thy life and to do thy work: with that consciousness in thy mind thou canst afford to eat, drink and be happy: also both physically and spiritually be as near clean as possible, and if thou art fortunate enough to possess a loving and beloved wife be happy with her; and keep up thy interest in thy work and be happy therewith.

"And everything that thou canst do whilst thou hast thy strength, do, it, for there is no work nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom (that can serve thee) in the grave towards which thou art travelling."

God's ways are past finding out:
"The race is not always to the swift
Nor is the battle always won by the mighty
Neither do the wise always have bread
Neither do the men of understanding always have wealth
Neither do the well informed (enjoy) grace, but
time and circumstances affect all of them."

„כִּי גַם לֹא־יֵדַע הָאָדָם אֶת־עִתּוֹ כַּדָּגִים שֶׁנֶּאֱחָזִים בִּמְצוֹדָה רָעָה וְכַצִּפֳּרִים הָאֲחֻזוֹת
בַּפָּח כָּהֵם יוּקָשִׁים בְּנֵי הָאָדָם לְעֵת רָעָה כִּשֶׁתִּפּוֹל עֲלֵיהֶם פִּתְאֹם"

"For no more doth man know his time than the fish that are caught in the evil net or the birds that are caught in the snare. Like them so are the sons of man overwhelmed by the evil time when it suddenly falls upon them".

Man cannot know nor is there any specific to save him from his fate.

He also perceived a certain historical fact that took place, from which he learnt many lessons.

"There was a small city and its inhabitants were few, and against it came a great king who surrounded it and built against it great bulwarks. And therein was found a poor man who was wise and he caused the city to escape through his wisdom, but no one remembered that poor man."

From the above incident or phenomenon he learnt several lessons.

„טוֹבָה חָכְמָה מִגְּבוּרָה"

"Wisdom was better than strength".

The wisdom of that poor wise man was more potent than the powerful great king who came to attack the city, for through his wisdom he saved the city.

„וְחָכְמַת הַמִּסְכֵּן בְּזוּיָה"

"And that the wisdom of the poor is despised".

„וּדְבָרָיו אֵינָם נִשְׁמָעִים"

"And his words are not heeded".

His claims are not heeded because "no one remembered that poor wise man" nor did they recognize his right to their gratitude.

„דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים בְּנַחַת נִשְׁמָעִים מִזַּעֲקַת מוֹשֵׁל בַּכְּסִילִים"

"The words of the wise, though subdued, are still heard; more so than the alarm of the ruler of the fools".

But at the crucial moment the words of the wise man, though subdued, were still more potent than the call to arms of the ruler, because after all his advice saved the city, which proves that —

„טוֹבָה חָכְמָה מִכְּלֵי קְרָב"

"Wisdom is better than weapons of war".

The wisdom of the poor wise man was more effective than the weapons and bulwarks of the great king.

„וְחוֹטֵא אֶחָד יְאַבֵּד טוֹבָה הַרְבֵּה"

"And one sinner will cause much good to be wasted".

One sinner obsessed by jealousy of the success of the poor wise man. Or it may be translated:

"And the one quality that he lacked (i. e. wealth) caused much good to be wasted", as otherwise the wise man might have continued to govern the state and would have benefited both the state and himself.

The people of the city referred to are like

„זְבוּבֵי מָוֶת יַבְאִישׁ יַבִּיעַ שֶׁמֶן רוֹקֵחַ יָקָר מֵחָכְמָה מִכָּבוֹד סִכְלוּת מְעָט"

"Carrion flies that despise the apothecary's ointment and cause it to bubble up; more precious than wisdom, than glory is the little folly".

Like the flies that feed on carrion, that feed on the festering sore, that in their effort to get at the open wound despise the apothecary's ointment that was placed on the wound, though that ointment is much valued by the flies as food, but in their desire to expose the open sore despise the

oil and expel the air bubbles through their proboscis in their effort to free themselves from the oil and get at the sore.

Thus in their desire to belittle the services of the poor wise man, they lost sight of his great wisdom and the glory he would reflect on them by wisely leading them. They only remembered his poverty and listened to the gibes of his wicked traducer and slanderer.

Pondering on the lessons learnt from the poor wise man, who served the city, and the fool that attacked him, he continued his reflections and the further lessons that it taught him.

„לֵב חָכָם לִימִינוֹ וְלֵב כְּסִיל לִשְׂמֹאלוֹ"

"The heart of the wise man is to his right, but the heart of the fool is to his left".

The wise man thinks and acts right, while the fool thinks and acts wrong.

"The fool's heartless demeanor makes itself evident wherever he goes."

The fool referred to is the slanderer whom he designates as fool because he derives no benefits personally from his slander.

Grave charges are brought against the poor wise man who, feeling that he is right, properly refuses to yield his position, as it is cowardly to submit.

His efforts however are fruitless; because the world is full of the incongruities that occur and which seem as if God has permitted those things to happen in error.

"Folly rules, men of substance serve, slaves ride on horseback and princes walk after them like slaves."

"The skill of the digger of the pit does not save him from falling therein".

"Nor does the knowledge of the danger of being bitten by a snake deter the man, whose business it is, from taking apart the stone fence, nor save him from being bitten by the snake."

"Stone carriers often become injured through their work, though they best should know how to prevent such injury."

Even the wood-chopper who excercised extraordinary diligence and care is not immune from danger.

And if a man is not immune, in such cases where he deals with inanimate objects, from possible danger, how can he save himself from the slanderer who is as subtle as the snake, both of whom hiss before they bite — the one by his hiss, and the other by his slanderous whisper.

„דִּבְרֵי פִי־חָכָם חֵן וְשִׂפְתוֹת כְּסִיל תְּבַלְּעֶנּוּ"

"The words from the wise man's mouth may be full of grace, yet the lips of the fool can destroy him".

„תְּחִלַּת דִּבְרֵי־פִיהוּ סִכְלוּת וְאַחֲרִית פִּיהוּ הוֹלֵלוּת רָעָה"

"The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly, but the end of his speech is wicked madness".

The slanderer begins his conversation with a joke, ridiculing his victim, and ends with a vicious attack, which he continues in spite of a just defence made by the victim, who can not know what will be the outcome of the attack, nor can he defend himself against an attack made behind his back.

The influence of the slander grows. Many now join in the attack. They succeed in wearing the wise man out to such an extent that he does not find himself safe to enter any city.

The Talmud comments and paraphrazes on the verse „כבלע רשע צדיק ממנו" — "When the wicked destroyes the one more just than himself" — That the truly just cannot be destroyed, for it is written „לא יאונה לצדיק כל עון" — "no harm will befall the righteous". — A perfect thing carries divine protection within it. It is only the quasi-just that can become a victim of the wicked who attack him: "One *more* righteous *than* the wicked"; but the truly righteous are immune from attack. Likewise in this case, a wound is required for the carrion flies to feed on. The wise man had the failing of poverty, or some other failing to make that attack justifiable and effective. The slanderer had to find the little folly or failing which he singled out and pointed at with derision and scorn, before he could win out against the poor wise man. And, looking back at his own life and realizing his own follies of which the slanderer made capital, which resulted in the loss of his Kingdom and all he possessed; and comparing his own luxurious rule with what it might have been, and finding how different his rule was from that of his warlike father, Qoheleth bitterly reproaches himself and says:

„אַי־לָךְ אֶרֶץ שֶׁמַּלְכֵּךְ נָעַר וְשָׂרַיִךְ בַּבֹּקֶר יֹאכֵלוּ"

"Woe to thee, oh Land, whose king is a weakling, and whose princes usher-in the morning with feasting".

Woe to the land that is ruled by a weak and luxurious king like himself; and happy was the land in his father David's time, when it was ruled by a King who was bold and free and whose princes were interested in deeds of valor instead of revelry.

Through the inactivity of the luxurious king and his counsellors does the state go to decay and through lack of effort to repair the error does the house of state become flooded. Not only are they not constructive

enough to find and create better economic conditions for their people, but they become destructive and drain the state's treasury, using it for non-essentials.

„לִשְׂחוֹק עֹשִׂים לֶחֶם וְיַיִן יְשַׂמַּח חַיִּים וְהַכֶּסֶף יַעֲנֶה אֶת־הַכֹּל"

"They prepare feasts for levity and wine for a merry life, but the money must answer for it all".

They make revels and orgies, and the money to pay for it all has to be found by heavily taxing the people: all of which led to his undoing. "Alas", he cries, "why was I not warned of my folly!"

But who was there to warn him? People dare not criticise the great, for they know that —

„גַּם בְּמַדָּעֲךָ מֶלֶךְ אַל־תְּקַלֵּל וּבְחַדְרֵי מִשְׁכָּבְךָ אַל־תְּקַלֵּל עָשִׁיר כִּי עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם יוֹלִיךְ אֶת־הַקּוֹל וּבַעַל הַכְּנָפַיִם יַגִּיד דָּבָר"

"Even amongst thy most intimate, thou darest not speak lightly of the king; and even in thy secret bed chamber thou darest not insult the rich; for a bird of the heavens may carry the voice and the winged thing may tell the tale".

This ends Chapter 10.

Not finding a specific for a rule of life, because the ways of the Lord are past finding out, he suggests good advice that should serve one in life.

As every act reacts in a long enough cycle, therefore take into consideration the elements of what is generally called chance in thy investments and diversify them. "Divide thy ventures" over the seven seas, diversify them in many ways. Thou art liable to find some profitable and thou wilt minimize thy losses; being in line with advice subsequently given by the Talmud: „לעולם ישליש אדם את מעותיו, שליש בקרקע, שליש בפרקמטיא ושליש בכספים" — "One should always keep his resources divided in three ways, one third in real estate, one third in business and one third in ready cash".

As a matter of fact, the Lecturer implies, thou art not sure of anything, even of the most common phenomenon, as for instance the much desired rainfall.

Thy first apprehension is "will the clouds be filled with rain" — „אִם־יִמָּלְאוּ הֶעָבִים גֶּשֶׁם"; and if they should, thy next concern is „(אם) עַל־הָאָרֶץ יָרִיקוּ" "Will (the clouds) empty themselves over the land" (where it is needed, or over the sea where it is superfluous). „וְאִם־יִפּוֹל (הגשם על ה) עֵץ בַּדָּרוֹם וְאִם בַּצָּפוֹן" "and should the rain fall (on the land, thy concern would be whether the rain would fall) on the trees in the south or in the north", in the direction where thou hast thy property or over some property where thou hast no interest. Or if it develops that the location of the rainfall is de-

finitely established — will it more clearly be defined "מְקוֹם שֶׁיִּפּוֹל הָעֵץ שָׁם יִהְוֶא" "that the place (on which the rain) will fall, will the trees (in which thou art interested) be there" (to receive it)?

Neither will excercising too much care serve thee, for —

"שֹׁמֵר רוּחַ לֹא יִזְרָע וְרֹאֶה בֶּעָבִים לֹא יִקְצוֹר"

"He who watches the wind will not sow, and he who keeps looking at the clouds will not reap".

"Thou canst no more know the laws that govern the wind and what will result therefrom, as it is impossible for thee to determine the nature of the child in its mother's womb, "and as thou canst not know the laws governing the wind" which is one of the phenomena of God, "thus canst thou not know any of the works of the Lord."

He practically came to the same conclusion with the Talmud, "Why worry about it": בכבשה דרחמנא למה לך – "What hast thou to do with the things the All Merciful Father concealed?"

And as he used the child in the mother's womb as an illustration of his example he advises,

"בַּבֹּקֶר זְרַע אֶת־זַרְעֶךָ וְלָעֶרֶב אַל־תַּנַּח יָדֶךָ כִּי אֵינְךָ יוֹדֵעַ אֵי זֶה יִכְשַׁר הֲזֶה אוֹ־זֶה וְאִם־שְׁנֵיהֶם כְּאֶחָד טוֹבִים"

"Sow thy seed in the morning and loosen not thy grasp in the evening, for thou canst not know which will excel, this one or that one, and mayhap they both will be equally good".

Likewise in thy marital relations, perform thy duty to thy wife later as thou didst earlier in life; because thou owest a duty to the unborn who is waiting for thee, to bring him out of the darkness into the light of the sun.

*One should learn the secret of being happy all the days of his life, by determining to live in the living present and enjoy each existing moment.* "The future holds darkness before us. It is useless to speculate and worry about it, and regret for the past is vain".

Therfore he advises

"שְׂמַח בָּחוּר בְּיַלְדוּתֶךָ וְיִטִיבְךָ לִבְךָ בִּימֵי בְחוּרוֹתֶיךָ וְהַלֵּךְ בְּדַרְכֵי לִבֶּךָ וּבְמַרְאֵי עֵינֶיךָ וְדַע כִּי עַל־כָּל־אֵלֶּה יְבִיאֲךָ הָאֱלֹהִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט"

"Be happy, oh Youth, with thy early years of development, and let thy heart be pleased with thy prime, and follow in the ways of thy heart and in the sight of thine eyes. *But know* that for all of these will the Lord bring thee to account".

Enjoy thy life, be not ungrateful enough to weep over a world full of beauty, for if thou wilt count and improve thy moments thou wilt find each moment useful and one in which to be happy. But beware and have in mind that thy pleasures should not be of a character that thou needst be ashamed of, but be true to thy God and thy fellow man. "For the Lord will assuredly bring thee to account and judgement for all thy actions and motives," and "as youth and the morning time of life is especially susceptible to vexation and passion, guard thyself against those faults, so that thou wilt not impair thy flesh in thy later days."

„וּזְכֹר אֶת־בּוֹרְאֶךָ בִּימֵי בְחוּרֹתֶיךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָבֹאוּ יְמֵי הָרָעָה וְהִגִּיעוּ שָׁנִים
אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵין־לִי בָהֶם חֵפֶץ"

"But rather remember thy Creator in thy choicest days, before the evil days will have come and the years will be reached (of which) thou wilt say, I have no desire in them".

Before old age will set in and approaching dissolution; whilst yet thou wilt not deny the sun and its curative powers will no longer affect thee; and whilst yet thou wilt not deny the light its power to cheer thee; and whilst yet thou wilt not deny the moon and the stars their powers to enchant thee with their magic charm*.

Before thy sight will have become impaired; and thou wilt no longer see the sun, the light, the moon, and the stars.

Before thy eyes will suffer from cataract, alternately watering and being clouded by a film;

Before thy feet will tremble and thy hands will have become palsied, and thy teeth will be lessened and will impair thy digestion; and all thy senses as well as thy intellect will become enfeebled;

Before thou wilt suffer from constipation incident to thy poor digestion;

Before thou wilt suffer from insomnia to the extent that "a bird will awaken thee and song will become unbearable to thee"; also thy articulatory as well as thy auditory organs will have become enfeebled;

Before thou wilt become a victim of nervousness, and fear the danger from above and not be sure of thy steps on the way;

Before thy habits will become despised by being uncleanly and despicable in thy ways, by not being able to take care of thyself; before thou wilt be burthened with parasites, and thy desire will cease: all of which are signs of dissolution, signs that thou art preparing to go to thy ever-

* תחשך from חשך — denial.

lasting home, and forerunners of the mourners gathering in the market place;

Before thy spinal cord will have become loosened;

Before thy nervous system will lose its tone;

Before thy metabolism, the functions of thy involuntary organs in thy viscera (which is like unto a golden bowl) will have been disturbed;

Before thy kidneys will cease to function;

Before thy peristaltic action will cease, and

Before thy head will be hurried to the grave, and the dust will return to the earth from which it came, and thy spirit will return to the Lord who gave it.

The specific was found. Be happy and hope that the Lord will give thee the capacity and means for happiness; be wise, and since God has willed thee to live and do thy work, learn to enjoy every moment of thy life. Do not worry about the future which no one can foretell. And lead such a life that thou wilt have no remorse nor regrets for the past. But remember thy Creator in the days of thy prime and know that he will hold thee responsible for all thy deeds and will exact an accounting from thee and pass judgement upon thee and recompense thee for thy good acts and exact retribution from thee for thy bad acts, somewhere, somehow, sometime, in a manner that thou wilt never know, in a most mysterious way.

# QOHELETH

## CHAPTER I

Title on the cover of the book explaining contents:

א "דִּבְרֵי קֹהֶלֶת בֶּן־דָּוִד מֶלֶךְ בִּירוּשָׁלָם"

1 "The[1] record of the lecture[2] (given by) the son of David[3] (who was) King in Jerusalem[4]".

1. דברי means record: דברי הימים means the record of the Years.

2. קהל is a gathering or assembly: קהלת means the object, or subject matter, of the gathering, which is to listen to the lecture given by the lecturer.

3. Evidently lending color to the theory propounded in the Talmud that Solomon was King, then he was deposed, after which it is a mooted question whether he ever resumed his reign. מלך והדיוט ומלך והדיוט וי"א מלך He was King, then an ordinary man; and some say: he was King, then an ordinary man, then again King.

It seems that the rebellion of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, caused King Solomon to flee for his life; though the Talmud cloaks that rebellion under a fantastic story (but no doubt with a cabalistic meaning which it desires to preserve) of Asmodeus the Master of Spirits, whom King Solomon had held under subjection and who rebelled against him and exiled him to a foreign land.

It is for that reason that the famous King Solomon vainly protested: "I, Qoheleth, *HAVE BEEN* a King over Israel in Jerusalem."

4. For that reason likewise does the publisher of that Lecture say "the son of David, King in Jerusalem" instead of King in Jerusalem, the Son of David, which he would have done, if קהלת were still king of Jerusalem.

This would also explain the pessimistic spirit in which קהלת is written, and the author's awful dread of the scandal-monger or propagandist, whom he designates as כסיל, against whose power he admitted it is useless to cope.

As the Talmud says, "שיר השירים" the "Song of songs" was written by King Solomon in his youth, משלי "Proverbs" were written in middle age,

and קהלת was written in his old age. His reference to the "old King and (against whom he cannot successfully cope) the fool, who no longer knows how to care for himself" מלך זקן וכסיל אשר לא ידע להזהר עוד points to his impotent condition, he being the Old King beset by Jeroboam, the fool, against whose vicious propaganda he was not able to defend himself.

The theory that this Lecture was given when he was in exile among a strange people who have heard of the prowess of his warlike father David, but whom the luxurious Monarch Solomon failed to impress, is also a reason why the publisher emphasizes that he was the "son of David". "King in Jerusalem" refers to David.

Being in exile among a people who knew not the God of Israel will also explain why the Tetragrammaton, the ineffable name of the Lord of Israel, is not mentioned in the entire lecture.

Being in exile will also explain the peculiar wording and phraseology of the Hebrew language used in Qoheleth, which was so distinctly different from the beautiful classical Hebrew used in שיר השירים עם משלי, "Proverbs and Song of songs".

It is quite likely that the Lecture was given in the language of the people he lived with while in exile.

That all he considered was natural religion, to which all mankind is heir, instead of creedal faith, peculiarly believed in by any particular class of people.

King Solomon only takes in consideration a rule of life and compensation that will be meted out in this mundane existence תחת השמש "beneath the sun".

He disregards the everlasting life and immortality (though he does not deny it).

No doubt the original manuscript was translated later into Hebrew, as the books of Maimonides were translated into Hebrew from the original Arabic.

That does not necessarily detract from the holiness of that book and its canonical value, no more than the fact that the original Hebrew letters were changed for the letters used by the Assyrians, which is the form of the Hebrew letters of to-day.

If the Thorah or the Talmud has a message to deliver, it is not as a respector of persons, or a worshipper of antiquity.

The greatest value of the Thorah lies in the Traditional literature accepted by the people of Israel without considering the vehicle through which the story is written, or the pseudo-characters attributed to the books, but looking deeper to the inner meaning of the message which is at the proper time and age illuminatingly delivered to the people.

The book of Ruth, beautiful as it is, has no absolute bearing on our religious laws.

There is no law that exacts the love and obedience of a daughter-in-law for her mother-in-law, though the love of Ruth for Naomi is its most beautiful characteristic.

Its value of giving the genealogy of King David is apparently the only thing that connects it with our people.

And Boaz's contention (as the Talmud declares) that a Moabitic woman is not subject to the prohibition debarring the Moabitic male from entering the congregation of the Lord, connects it with the laws of our people.

The Zohar Hakadosh being attributed to Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai, the Sefer Hakonnah being attributed to Rabbi Nehuniah ben Hakonah, the Sefer Yezirah to our father Abraham the Patriarch is not taken too seriously by students of those books, and it is a matter of indifference to them who did write them.

The important thing is what is in those books, what is the message:

Is the time ripe for any particular message to reach us and become intelligible to us?

Does the "Luiga Sharira" of the Jewish race impose its will upon us? The race from its inception, through all its manifold expressions governed by the soul of our people as a whole, for all time, from eternity to eternity and which subconsciously determines what is or is not Canonical on Jewish. As our sages declared „הנח להם לישראל אם לא נביאים הם בני נביאים הם": "Be tolerant to Israel: if they are not themselves prophets they are descended from prophets", and unconsciously the soul of Israel, crystallized by all of Israel, never errs. Does that soul demand that any part of our tradition, cryptic heretofore, should quicken with life at the proper period to enable us to see the erstwhile dead letters come to life and soar?

The refrain running through the lecture is

ב „הֶבֶל הֲבָלִים אָמַר קֹהֶלֶת הֶבֶל הֲבָלִים הַכֹּל הָבֶל"

2 "Vanity of Vanities, sayeth the Lecturer, Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity".

Vanity הבל in one or the other of its many synonyms runs as a refrain through the Lecture.

The synonyms of הבל are:

Vain, useless, purposeless, independable, false, evanescent, worthless, substanceless, stupid.

## THE THESIS

ג „מַה־יִּתְרוֹן לָאָדָם בְּכָל־עֲמָלוֹ שֶׁיַּעֲמֹל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

"What advantage is there to a man with[1] all his efforts that he should strive beneath[2] the sun". 3

1. What advantage is there to a man besides the satisfying of the urge of the effort itself? What endures to man beneath the sun in the reward and punishment or compensation of this mundane life that should justify him in his urge to strive? also what specific or rule of life should man employ in his striving? (see Introduction).

2. As the Midrash says: תחת השמש אין יתרון למעלה מן השמש יש יתרון.

There is no advantage beneath the sun, but there is an advantage beyond.

That there is a general urge for action, striving and work, but that its efforts are apparently purposeless and unjustified, may be noted from the following examples:

ד „דּוֹר הֹלֵךְ וְדוֹר בָּא וְהָאָרֶץ לְעוֹלָם עֹמָדֶת"

"A generation passes, a (new) generation comes, but the world ever stands". 4

Ages and ages pass and the world makes no apparent progress.*

ה „וְזָרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וּבָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְאֶל־מְקוֹמוֹ שׁוֹאֵף זוֹרֵחַ הוּא שָׁם"

"And the sun rises and the sun sets, and to (reach) its place does it desire to shine there". 5

Likewise the urge of the sun to seek new places in space to shed its brilliant rays:

ו „הוֹלֵךְ אֶל־דָּרוֹם וְסוֹבֵב אֶל־צָפוֹן סוֹבֵב סֹבֵב הוֹלֵךְ הָרוּחַ וְעַל־סְבִיבֹתָיו שָׁב הָרוּחַ"

"Traveling toward the South and turning towards the North—round and round does the wind blow, and on its circuits does the wind return". 6

* עמדת in the sense of ותעמד מלדת.

ז „כָּל־הַנְּחָלִים הֹלְכִים אֶל־הַיָּם וְהַיָּם אֵינֶנּוּ מָלֵא אֶל־מְקוֹם שֶׁהַנְּחָלִים הֹלְכִים שָׁם הֵם שָׁבִים לָלָכֶת"

7 "All the streams flow into the sea, but the sea does not become filled (therewith), (and) to the place that the streams flow thence do they continue to flow".

Example: "ושב וקבצך" He will again gather thee.

ח „כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים יְגֵעִים לֹא־יוּכַל אִישׁ לְדַבֵּר לֹא־תִשְׂבַּע עַיִן לִרְאוֹת וְלֹא־תִמָּלֵא אֹזֶן מִשְּׁמֹעַ"

8 "Everything shows effort, nor does man finish his speech, the eye is not satisfied with its sight, nor does the ear become filled with what it has heard".

There is an urge to continued and sustained effort in more examples than man can enumerate, and an urge and curiosity to continue to speak, see or hear, even though one knows that —

ט „מַה־שֶּׁהָיָה הוּא שֶׁיִּהְיֶה וּמַה־שֶּׁנַּעֲשָׂה הוּא שֶׁיֵּעָשֶׂה וְאֵין כָּל־חָדָשׁ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

9 "What has been will again be, and what has been done will again be done, and (apparently) there is nothing new under the sun".

When we consider this mundane existence solely in the dimensions which take in consideration time and space, "beneath the sun" no ultimate rejuvenation or startling change takes place that would justify the continued urge for effort to be projected in the future.

י „יֵשׁ דָּבָר שֶׁיֹּאמַר רְאֵה־זֶה חָדָשׁ הוּא כְּבָר הָיָה לְעֹלָמִים אֲשֶׁר הָיָה מִלְּפָנֵינוּ"

10 "If there be a thing that one may say, Behold, this is something new! It has long been in the past that has been before us".

Should one exclaim: "Behold! This is something new": in the past that has been before us, it existed in the mysteries as yet undiscovered. Transpose the sentence to read: כבר אשר היה מלפנינו היה לעלמים. As example: "זה שמי לעלם" "This, my name should be concealed".

יא „אֵין זִכָּרוֹן לָרִאשֹׁנִים וְגַם לָאַחֲרֹנִים שֶׁיִּהְיוּ לֹא־יִהְיֶה לָהֶם זִכָּרוֹן עִם שֶׁיִּהְיוּ לָאַחֲרֹנָה"

11 "There is no remembrance of the earlier ones, likewise of the later ones that will be—will there be no remembrance with those that will be still later".

Both the discoverer as well as the discovery will pass in oblivion. Even the advantage of fame does not exist permanently.

יב „אֲנִי קֹהֶלֶת הָיִיתִי מֶלֶךְ עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּירוּשָׁלָם"

"I, the lecturer, *HAVE BEEN* King over Israel in Jerusalem". 12

I who have wielded the sceptre over a great people stand as a living example of the instability of human fortune. I am now shorn of my greatness, bereft of my Kingdom and kindred, and obliged to support myself through my lectures.

יג „וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־לִבִּי לִדְרוֹשׁ וְלָתוּר בַּחָכְמָה עַל כָּל־אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמָיִם הוּא
עִנְיַן רָע נָתַן אֱלֹהִים לִבְנֵי הָאָדָם לַעֲנוֹת בּוֹ"

"But I had given over my heart to research, and to explore in the (realms of) wisdom over all that has been done under the Heavens. This is a bad speculation that the Lord hath given to the sons of man to be engaged therewith". 13

Because —

יד „רָאִיתִי אֶת־כָּל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים שֶׁנַּעֲשׂוּ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְהִנֵּה הַכֹּל הֶבֶל וּרְעוּת רוּחַ"

"I have perceived all the works that were done under the sun; and behold, all is Vanity and a breaking of the spirit". 14

And I could not see what would be gained by further effort, but I was confronted with the following proposition:

טו „מְעֻוָּת לֹא־יוּכַל לִתְקֹן וְחֶסְרוֹן לֹא־יוּכַל לְהִמָּנוֹת"

"The wrong that has been done cannot be corrected, and what has been missed cannot be taken into account". 15

I must work or commit the sin of omission, and I must work properly or commit the sin of commission.

I cannot take refuge in inactivity.

טז „דִּבַּרְתִּי אֲנִי עִם־לִבִּי לֵאמֹר אֲנִי הִנֵּה הִגְדַּלְתִּי וְהוֹסַפְתִּי חָכְמָה עַל כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה
לְפָנַי עַל־יְרוּשָׁלָם וְלִבִּי רָאָה הַרְבֵּה חָכְמָה וָדָעַת"

"I communed with my heart saying: Behold, I have become great, and I have increased in wisdom over all that have been before me over Jerusalem, and my heart did indeed perceive much wisdom and knowledge". 16

יז „וָאֶתְּנָה לִבִּי לָדַעַת חָכְמָה וְדַעַת הוֹלֵלוֹת וְשִׂכְלוּת יָדַעְתִּי שֶׁגַּם־זֶה הוּא רַעְיוֹן רוּחַ"

17 "And I have given over my heart to the knowledge of wisdom, and to the knowledge of hilarity and folly. I know now that this was an empty thought".

יח „כִּי בְּרֹב חָכְמָה רָב־כָּעַס וְיוֹסִיף דַּעַת יוֹסִיף מַכְאוֹב"

18 "For through much wisdom comes much vexation, and he who gathers knowledge gathers pain".

He suffers from his painful experiences.

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## CHAPTER II

In detail, this is how I proceeded:

א „אָמַרְתִּי אֲנִי בִלְבִּי לְכָה־נָּא אֲנַסְּכָה בְשִׂמְחָה וּרְאֵה בְטוֹב וְהִנֵּה גַם־הוּא הָבֶל"

"I said in my heart, come now: let me tempt thee with joy, and ex- 1
perience the good (in life); and behold! This was also Vanity".

ב „לִשְׂחוֹק אָמַרְתִּי מְהוֹלָל וּלְשִׂמְחָה מַה־זּוֹה עֹשָׂה"

"For laughter, I said, was hilarity; and of the joy I said, what 2
causeth it?"

Empty laughter was stupid and I was not shallow enough to find pleasure in a causeless joy.

ג „תַּרְתִּי בִלְבִּי לִמְשׁוֹךְ בַּיַּיִן אֶת־בְּשָׂרִי וְלִבִּי נֹהֵג בַּחָכְמָה וְלֶאֱחֹז בְּסִכְלוּת עַד ו אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶה אֵי־זֶה טוֹב לִבְנֵי הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשׂוּ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם מִסְפַּר יְמֵי חַיֵּיהֶם"

"I schooled my heart to indulge my flesh with wine (feasts), and 3
that my heart shall lead with wisdom, (at the same time) keeping hold on folly, until I shall perceive which is the proper thing for the sons of man to do the numbered days of their lives beneath the heavens".

Transporse sentence to read אי זה טוב לבני האדם אשר יעשו מספר ימי חייהם תחת השמים.

I engaged myself with the serious as well as the frivolous in the arts and sciences of life:

ד „הִגְדַּלְתִּי מַעֲשָׂי בָּנִיתִי לִי בָּתִּים נָטַעְתִּי לִי כְּרָמִים"

"I have extended my works, I built for myself houses, I planted 4
for myself vineyards".

I had various plans to keep up my interest in my work:

ה „עָשִׂיתִי לִי גַּנּוֹת וּפַרְדֵּסִים וְנָטַעְתִּי בָהֶם עֵץ כָּל־פֶּרִי"

5 "I have made me gardens and orchards, and planted therein trees bearing all manner of fruit".

ו „עָשִׂיתִי לִי בְּרֵכוֹת מָיִם לְהַשְׁקוֹת מֵהֶם יַעַר צוֹמֵחַ עֵצִים"

6 "I have made me pools of water to irrigate therewith the woods containing the sprouting trees".

ז „קָנִיתִי עֲבָדִים וּשְׁפָחוֹת וּבְנֵי־בַיִת הָיָה לִי גַּם מִקְנֶה בָקָר וָצֹאן הַרְבֵּה הָיָה לִי מִכֹּל שֶׁהָיוּ לְפָנַי בִּירוּשָׁלָם"

7 "I have acquired male and female slaves: I also possessed (a greater) household retinue, I also possessed herds and flocks in a greater number, than those that were before me in Jerusalem".

ח „כָּנַסְתִּי לִי גַּם־כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב וּסְגֻלַּת מְלָכִים וְהַמְּדִינוֹת עָשִׂיתִי לִי שָׁרִים וְשָׁרוֹת וְתַעֲנוּגוֹת בְּנֵי הָאָדָם שִׁדָּה וְשִׁדּוֹת"

8 "I gathered me also silver and gold and the treasures of Kings and the provinces. I prepared for myself male and female singers, and the pleasures of the sons of man, coaches and caravans".*

ט „וְגָדַלְתִּי וְהוֹסַפְתִּי מִכֹּל שֶׁהָיָה לְפָנַי בִּירוּשָׁלָם אַף חָכְמָתִי עָמְדָה לִי"

9 "And I grew, and gathered, more than any that have been before me in Jerusalem. Indeed my wisdom stood by me".

י „וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר שָׁאֲלוּ עֵינַי לֹא אָצַלְתִּי מֵהֶם לֹא־מָנַעְתִּי אֶת־לִבִּי מִכָּל־שִׂמְחָה כִּי־לִבִּי שָׂמֵחַ מִכָּל־עֲמָלִי וְזֶה־הָיָה חֶלְקִי מִכָּל־עֲמָלִי"

10 "And everything that my eyes desired did I not keep away from them. I have not denied my heart from any pleasure, that my heart shall find joy from all my labors; but, (Alas!) *this* remained my portion from all my possessions!" —

pointing to his wandering staff an the lecture forum.**

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* שדה ושדות — as שדה תיבה ומגדל — "the pleasure of the companionship of the sons of man in my travels privately and promiscuously".

** עמל means possessions, as ובעמל שעמלתי לעשות.

יא „וּפָנִיתִי אֲנִי בְּכָל־מַעֲשַׂי שֶׁעָשׂוּ יָדַי וּבֶעָמָל שֶׁעָמַלְתִּי לַעֲשׂוֹת וְהִנֵּה הַכֹּל הֶבֶל
וּרְעוּת רוּחַ וְאֵין יִתְרוֹן תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

"And I myself examined into all the accomplishments that my hands performed, and in my possessions that I toiled to acquire: and, behold: everything was Vanity and a breaking of the spirit, and there was no advantage under the sun". 11

Besides the fact that nothing is left to me of my possessions now, even before I lost them they were vain and dispiriting.

יב „וּפָנִיתִי אֲנִי לִרְאוֹת חָכְמָה וְהוֹלֵלוֹת וְסִכְלוּת כִּי מָה הָאָדָם שֶׁיָּבוֹא אַחֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֵת אֲשֶׁר־כְּבָר עֲשׂוּהוּ"

"And I myself turned to perceive wisdom, hilarity and folly; for what manner of man may come after the King—what he hath already done". 12

I myself was obliged to be my own critic, and to determine the relative values of wisdom, hilarity and folly; for what manner of man must he be, who would dare criticize the King, especially where it would not be a case of admonishing him against future errors, but of criticizing him for things that he had already done.

יג „וְרָאִיתִי אֲנִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ יִתְרוֹן לַחָכְמָה מִן־הַסִּכְלוּת כִּיתְרוֹן הָאוֹר מִן־הַחֹשֶׁךְ"

"And I myself saw, that there is as much advantage to wisdom over folly, as there is the advantage to light over darkness". 13

יד „חֲכַם עֵינָיו בְּרֹאשׁוֹ וְהַכְּסִיל בַּחֹשֶׁךְ הוֹלֵךְ וְיָדַעְתִּי גַם־אֲנִי שֶׁמִּקְרֶה אֶחָד
יִקְרֶה אֶת־כֻּלָּם"

"The wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool travels in darkness; though I also knew, that the one event may happen to all". 14

I realized that wisdom has a great advantage over folly, for the wise man can foretell what may happen, while the fool does not know until it does happen; though neither can prevent the thing from happening.*

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* בראשו means בראש הדבר — at the inception of the thing.

טו „וְאָמַרְתִּי אֲנִי בִּלְבִּי כְּמִקְרֵה הַכְּסִיל גַּם־אֹתִי יִקְרֵנִי וְלָמָּה חָכַמְתִּי אֲנִי אָז יֹתֵר
וְדִבַּרְתִּי בִלְבִּי שֶׁגַּם־זֶה הָבֶל"

15 "And I said in my heart, since what may happen to the fool may also happen to me, for what purpose then have I made myself more wise? And I said in my heart, that this also is Vanity".

I thought that since the fool, as well as myself, is subject to the same accident, for what purpose did I exceed him in wisdom? And I, therefore, determined that wisdom is futile to save one from the accident of life.

טז „כִּי אֵין זִכָּרוֹן לֶחָכָם עִם־הַכְּסִיל לְעוֹלָם בְּשֶׁכְּבָר הַיָּמִים הַבָּאִים הַכֹּל נִשְׁכָּח
וְאֵיךְ יָמוּת הֶחָכָם עִם־הַכְּסִיל"

16 "Because there is no remembrance of the wise man with the fool forever. When the coming days will have become past, all will be forgotten, but how can the wise man die as the fool?"

Even fame is not immortal: the fool and his folly, the wise man and his wisdom — all will be forgotten and dead. What an awful verity to face!

יז „וְשָׂנֵאתִי אֶת־הַחַיִּים כִּי רַע עָלַי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה שֶׁנַּעֲשָׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ כִּי־הַכֹּל
הֶבֶל וּרְעוּת רוּחַ"

17 "And I hated life; for the things that were done under the sun were disagreeable to me, since all is Vanity and a breaking of the spirit".

יח „וְשָׂנֵאתִי אֲנִי אֶת־כָּל־עֲמָלִי שֶׁאֲנִי עָמֵל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ שֶׁאַנִּיחֶנּוּ לָאָדָם
שֶׁיִּהְיֶה אַחֲרָי"

18 "And I hated all my possessions, for which I toiled under the sun; which I will be obliged to leave to the man who will exist after me".

יט „וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ הֶחָכָם יִהְיֶה אוֹ סָכָל וְיִשְׁלַט בְּכָל־עֲמָלִי שֶׁעָמַלְתִּי וְשֶׁחָכַמְתִּי תַּחַת
הַשָּׁמֶשׁ גַּם־זֶה הָבֶל"

19 "And who knows, whether he will be a wise man or a fool who will rule over my possessions, for which I toiled and for which I became wise under the sun. This also is Vanity".

כ „וְסַבּוֹתִי אֲנִי לְיַאֵשׁ אֶת־לִבִּי עַל כָּל־הֶעָמָל שֶׁעָמַלְתִּי תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

"And I turned my heart to despair over all my possessions, for which I have toiled under the sun". 20

כא „כִּי־יֵשׁ אָדָם שֶׁעֲמָלוֹ בְּחָכְמָה וּבְדַעַת וּבְכִשָּׁרוֹן וּלְאָדָם שֶׁלֹּא עָמַל־בּוֹ יִתְּנֶנּוּ חֶלְקוֹ גַּם־זֶה הֶבֶל וְרָעָה רַבָּה"

"For the case may be, that a man whose possessions (were the result) of wisdom and knowledge and proper dealings, — to a man that hath not toiled will he deliver his portion. This also, therefore, is Vanity and a great evil". 21

Where it required great skill, wisdom, and knowledge, and proper dealings to create my properties, I may be obliged to leave them in the hands of one inexperienced and not possessing the qualities necessary to retain them.

כב „כִּי מֶה־הֹוֶה לָאָדָם בְּכָל־עֲמָלוֹ וּבְרַעְיוֹן לִבּוֹ שֶׁהוּא עָמֵל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

"For what remains to the man under the sun, for all his toil and for the thoughts of his heart that he employed?" 22

כג „כִּי כָל־יָמָיו מַכְאֹבִים וְכַעַס עִנְיָנוֹ גַּם־בַּלַּיְלָה לֹא־שָׁכַב לִבּוֹ גַּם־זֶה הֶבֶל הוּא"

"For which all his days were passed in pain and his thoughts in vexation. Even in the night his heart did not sleep. That also is Vanity". 23

And now his possessions, for which he toiled day and night, became destroyed by the one that succeeds him, out of sheer incapacity to hold them; and all the pain and thought spent by the original owner was vain and for naught.

כד „אֵין־טוֹב בָּאָדָם שֶׁיֹּאכַל וְשָׁתָה וְהֶרְאָה אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ טוֹב בַּעֲמָלוֹ גַּם זֹה רָאִיתִי אָנִי כִּי מִיַּד הָאֱלֹהִים הִיא"

"It is not such a good thing in man that he should eat and drink, and only by himself experience the benefits for his toil; but even this, I perceived, is from the hand of God".* 24

* נפשו means עצמו — himself.

כה „כִּי מִי יֹאכַל וּמִי יָחוּשׁ חוּץ מִמֶּנִּי"

25 "For who will eat, and who will enjoy? (someone) besides myself".

I have been debarred from reaping the reward for my toil, which was enjoyed by others.

כו „כִּי לְאָדָם שֶׁטּוֹב לְפָנָיו נָתַן חָכְמָה וְדַעַת וְשִׂמְחָה וְלַחוֹטֵא נָתַן עִנְיַן לֶאֱסֹף וְלִכְנוֹס
לָתֵת לְטוֹב לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים גַּם־זֶה הֶבֶל וּרְעוּת רוּחַ"

26 "For to a man that is good before Him (God) did He give wisdom, knowledge and happiness; but to the one who missed His favor, did He give the idea to amass and to gather, so as to give that to the one that appears good before the Lord. That also is Vanity and a breaking of the spirit".

It, therfore, must be that I am not the one favored by the Lord.*

* חוטא in the sense of החטיא המטרה — missed his aim.

## CHAPTER III

א „לַכֹּל זְמָן וְעֵת לְכָל־חֵפֶץ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמָיִם"

1 "There is a season for every one, and a (fixed) time for everything beneath the heavens".

For everyone under the heavens there is a preordained season, when he must perform his one or sureval act as scheduled; and for everything under the sun there is a fixed period that governs and controls it. Even in man's otherwise volitional parts of the drama of life, circumstances of a general potency and influence are scheduled to take place at fixed periods, that govern and control his actions.

ב „עֵת לָלֶדֶת וְעֵת לָמוּת עֵת לָטַעַת וְעֵת לַעֲקוֹר נָטוּעַ"

2 "A time to be born and a time to die,
A time to plant and a time to uproot what has been planted".

ג „עֵת לַהֲרוֹג וְעֵת לִרְפּוֹא עֵת לִפְרוֹץ וְעֵת לִבְנוֹת"

3 "A time to kill, and a time to cure,
A time to make a breach, and a time to build".

ד „עֵת לִבְכּוֹת וְעֵת לִשְׂחוֹק עֵת סְפוֹד וְעֵת רְקוֹד"

4 "A time to weep and a time to laugh,
A time to mourn and a time to dance".

ה „עֵת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ אֲבָנִים וְעֵת כְּנוֹס אֲבָנִים עֵת לַחֲבוֹק וְעֵת לִרְחֹק מֵחַבֵּק"

5 "A time to cast away stones (or children),
And a time to gather stones (or children).*
A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing".

ו „עֵת לְבַקֵּשׁ וְעֵת לְאַבֵּד עֵת לִשְׁמוֹר וְעֵת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ"

6 "A time to search and a time to lose,
A time to guard and a time to abandon".

* אבנים in the sense of תשתפכנה אבני קדש.

ז „עֵת לִקְרוֹעַ וְעֵת לִתְפּוֹר עֵת לַחֲשׁוֹת וְעֵת לְדַבֵּר"

7 "A time to tear and a time to sew,
A time to keep silent and a time to speak".

ח „עֵת לֶאֱהֹב וְעֵת לִשְׂנֹא עֵת מִלְחָמָה וְעֵת שָׁלוֹם"

8 "A time to love and a time to hate,
A time for war and a time for peace".

Since all those conditions and circumstances must take place in their fixed time, and since all normal laws become affected when influenced by these conditions and circumstances, and since feeble man is necessarily influenced by the abnormal laws created by those abnormal conditions and circumstances, —

ט „מַה־יִּתְרוֹן הָעוֹשֶׂה בַּאֲשֶׁר הוּא עָמֵל" .

9 "What doth the worker gain, by the reason of his labor?"

י „רָאִיתִי אֶת־הָעִנְיָן אֲשֶׁר נָתַן אֱלֹהִים לִבְנֵי הָאָדָם לַעֲנוֹת בּוֹ"

10 "I observed the urge (for effort) that the Lord hath given to the sons of man to be urged thereby".

יא „אֶת־הַכֹּל עָשָׂה יָפֶה בְּעִתּוֹ גַּם אֶת־הָעֹלָם נָתַן בְּלִבָּם מִבְּלִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִמְצָא
הָאָדָם אֶת־הַמַּעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה הָאֱלֹהִים מֵרֹאשׁ וְעַד־סוֹף"

11 "Everything hath He done properly in its time: even the mysteriousness that He gave in their hearts, so that man shall not be able to grasp the deed that the Lord has done from beginning to end".

The urge for effort must have a purpose, because, on close analysis, everything is as it should be, even to the extent that man gropes and is incapable of grasping the purpose of the Lord in permitting a certain thing to take place. That also is proper.

יב „יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אֵין טוֹב בָּם כִּי אִם־לִשְׂמוֹחַ וְלַעֲשׂוֹת טוֹב בְּחַיָּיו"

12 "I know that there is nothing better in them than to be happy and to do good with his life".

I know that the speculation and the endeavor to discover the ways of the Lord will be of no avail, and that the best thing to do with one's life is to do good therewith and to rejoice therein. Transpose sentence to read ידעתי כי אין טום כי אם לשמוח בם ולעשות טוב בחייו.

יג „וְגַם כָּל־הָאָדָם שֶׁיֹּאכַל וְשָׁתָה וְרָאָה טוֹב בְּכָל־עֲמָלוֹ מַתַּת אֱלֹהִים הִיא"

"But also (know) that every man that would eat and drink and experience the benefit of all his toil, that is a gift of God", 13

— but is not of man's choosing.

יד „יָדַעְתִּי כִּי כָּל־אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה הָאֱלֹהִים הוּא יִהְיֶה לְעוֹלָם עָלָיו אֵין לְהוֹסִיף וּמִמֶּנּוּ אֵין לִגְרֹעַ וְהָאֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה שֶׁיִּרְאוּ מִלְּפָנָיו"

"I know, that all that the Lord will do will last forever. Nothing can be added thereto, and nothing may be detracted therefrom: and the Lord, for whom they should have respect, hath done it". 14

What is, is the most perfect thing or condition that could be: it is most stable: needs no improvement nor refinement, since the Lord who is entitled to our veneration has done it. Transpose to read והאלהים שיראו מלפניו עשה.

טו „מַה־שֶּׁהָיָה כְּבָר הוּא וַאֲשֶׁר לִהְיוֹת כְּבָר הָיָה וְהָאֱלֹהִים יְבַקֵּשׁ אֶת־נִרְדָּף"

"What has been, has been in the past, and what will be, has (also) been in the past, and it is the Lord that searches for the thing in pursuit". 15

I know that the urge for action is apparently a repetition, but it cannot be useless, since it is God that orders the pursuit into the future.

טז „וְעוֹד רָאִיתִי תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ מְקוֹם הַמִּשְׁפָּט שָׁמָּה הָרֶשַׁע וּמְקוֹם הַצֶּדֶק שָׁמָּה הָרָשַׁע"

"And besides, I noticed beneath the sun, that the place of judgment, there, is the wickedness, and the place of justice, there, is the fruits of the wickedness". 16

I also noticed that the courts of justice do not mete out proper and honest judgments, but the judgment is often wicked for the reason of the Justices being bribed by the wicked with the fruits of their wickedness.

יז „אָמַרְתִּי אֲנִי בִּלְבִּי אֶת־הַצַּדִּיק וְאֶת־הָרָשָׁע יִשְׁפֹּט הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי־עֵת לְכָל־חֵפֶץ וְעַל כָּל־הַמַּעֲשֶׂה שָׁם"

"I said in my heart, the just and the wicked will the Lord judge yonder, and for all the deeds, since there is a time for everything". 17

I came to the conclusion, since there is no justice beneath the sun and since there is a time for everything, — that God will Himself judge the just and the wicked it the Beyond, in some other life, if justice has not been properly meted out in this life, and for all the deeds that have been done. Transpose to read את הצדיק ואת הרשע ישפוט האלהים שם ועל כל המעשה כי עת לכל חפץ.

יח „אָמַרְתִּי אֲנִי בִלְבִּי עַל־דִּבְרַת בְּנֵי הָאָדָם לְבָרָם הָאֱלֹהִים וְלִרְאוֹת
שְׁהֵם־בְּהֵמָה הֵמָּה לָהֶם"

18 "I said in my heart, regarding the arguments of the sons of man, when they criticize the Lord and conceive (the idea) that themselves are beasts, they are properly (compared) to them".

I gave much thought regarding the arguments of those who would criticize God's work, and who only succeed in proving that they are but as beasts unto themselves, for they argue.

יט „כִּי מִקְרֶה בְנֵי־הָאָדָם וּמִקְרֶה הַבְּהֵמָה וּמִקְרֶה אֶחָד לָהֶם כְּמוֹת זֶה כֵּן מוֹת זֶה
וְרוּחַ אֶחָד לַכֹּל וּמוֹתַר הָאָדָם מִן־הַבְּהֵמָה אָיִן כִּי הַכֹּל הָבֶל"

19 "There is an accident to the sons of man and an accident to the beast, and the one accident to them (both): As the one dies so does the other die: There is (therefore) one spirit to all, and the advantage of man over the beast does not exist, since all is Vanity".

Both man and beasts are subject to the same phenomena, both are subject to death: — neither spirit can be considered immortal.

Besides:

כ „הַכֹּל הוֹלֵךְ אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶחָד הַכֹּל הָיָה מִן־הֶעָפָר וְהַכֹּל שָׁב אֶל־הֶעָפָר"

20 "Everyone goes to the one place, everything was from the earth and everything returns to the earth".

כא „מִי יוֹדֵעַ רוּחַ בְּנֵי הָאָדָם הָעֹלָה הִיא לְמָעְלָה וְרוּחַ הַבְּהֵמָה הַיֹּרֶדֶת הִיא
לְמַטָּה לָאָרֶץ"

21 "Who knows, whether it is the spirit of man that goes up above, and whether it is the spirit of the beast that goes down below the earth".

כב „וְרָאִיתִי כִּי אֵין טוֹב מֵאֲשֶׁר יִשְׂמַח הָאָדָם בְּמַעֲשָׂיו כִּי־הוּא חֶלְקוֹ כִּי מִי יְבִיאֶנּוּ
לִרְאוֹת בְּמֶה שֶׁיִּהְיֶה אַחֲרָיו"

"And I saw that there was nothing better than that a man should 22
be happy with his work, whatever be his portion, since who can
bring him to see what will be after him".

Since everything that is is right, and God sees and does everything; —

And since there is no dependence on human justice, and we are forced to depend on Heavenly Justice, in which case the spirit of man will receive his reward and punishment in the Beyond:

The only alternative position one may take is the agnostic, which is that man is no better than the beasts, since there is no proof of the survival of his spirit.

In either case one may safely take the stand, that there is nothing better than that man should be happy in his work, whatever be his lot.

## CHAPTER IV

After I had determined to cease speculating about the future, and to decide to be happy with my lot, —

א „וְשַׁבְתִּי אֲנִי וָאֶרְאֶה אֶת־כָּל־הָעֲשֻׁקִים אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשִׂים תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְהִנֵּה דִמְעַת
הָעֲשֻׁקִים וְאֵין לָהֶם מְנַחֵם וּמִיַּד עֹשְׁקֵיהֶם כֹּחַ וְאֵין לָהֶם מְנַחֵם"

1 "And I returned, and saw all the persecutions that were being perpetrated under the sun, and behold! the tears of the persecuted — and there is none to comfort them; nor (is there) power (to save them) from the hands of their persecutors, and there is none to comfort them".

How could I be happy when the world was filled with injustice and misery?

ב „וְשִׁבַּחְתִּי אֲנִי אֶת־הַמֵּתִים שֶׁכְּבָר מֵתוּ מִן־הַחַיִּים אֲשֶׁר הֵמָּה חַיִּים עֲדֶנָה"

2 "And I preferred the dead, that have long since died, to the living: those that are living at the present time".

I envied the dead who are saved the dread of such misfortune happening to themselves.

ג „וְטוֹב מִשְּׁנֵיהֶם אֶת אֲשֶׁר־עֲדֶן לֹא הָיָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־רָאָה אֶת־הַמַּעֲשֶׂה הָרָע אֲשֶׁר
נַעֲשָׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

3 "And better than both, is the one that has not yet existed, who has not seen the evil deed, that is being done under the sun".

And happier than both the persecuted and the one in dread of possible persecution, is he who has not yet been born, and has not seen the evil that is being done.

ד „וְרָאִיתִי אֲנִי אֶת־כָּל־עָמָל וְאֵת כָּל־כִּשְׁרוֹן הַמַּעֲשֶׂה כִּי הִיא קִנְאַת־אִישׁ מֵרֵעֵהוּ
גַּם־זֶה הֶבֶל וּרְעוּת רוּחַ"

4 "And I myself saw that all the effort and all the perfection of deed was but the jealousy of a man of his neighbor. This is also Vanity and a breaking of the spirit".

And I saw that the championing of the persecuted was but an exploitation of the unfortunate to show off before his neighbor; this, therefore, was Vanity and a breaking of the spirit.

ה „הַכְּסִיל חֹבֵק אֶת־יָדָיו וְאֹכֵל אֶת־בְּשָׂרוֹ"

"The fool folds his hands and destroyes his flesh". 5

And when at last I determined to help the unfortunate wight, I found that he refused to make any effort to help himself. The fool folds his hands in inactivity and permits his flesh to be destroyed.

ו „טוֹב מְלֹא כַף נָחַת מִמְּלֹא חָפְנַיִם עָמָל וּרְעוּת רוּחַ"

"A handfull of satisfaction is better than two fists full of trouble and a breaking of the spirit". 6

Does not the unfortunate fool realize that it is worth the effort to save himself from his hapless situation, even though by doing so he would be subject to the risk of losing a portion of his possessions and perhaps shorten his life, which the Lecturer characterizes as a handfull of satisfaction that might remain to him after the struggle? Is not that better than the life of misery, which he characterizes as the many fists full of trouble and a breaking of the spirit? So I despaired of my ability to save the unfortunate from his intolerable situation, and I determined to attend to my own business, realizing that the most efficacious help is self-help.

ז „וְשַׁבְתִּי אֲנִי וָאֶרְאֶה הֶבֶל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

"And I turned and beheld another Vanity beneath the sun". 7

ח „יֵשׁ אֶחָד וְאֵין שֵׁנִי גַּם בֵּן וָאָח אֵין־לוֹ וְאֵין קֵץ לְכָל־עֲמָלוֹ גַּם־עֵינוֹ לֹא־תִשְׂבַּע עֹשֶׁר וּלְמִי אֲנִי עָמֵל וּמְחַסֵּר אֶת־נַפְשִׁי מִטּוֹבָה גַּם־זֶה הֶבֶל וְעִנְיַן רָע הוּא"

"There is (a case of) one without a companion; also hath neither son nor brother, and yet is there no end to all his toil; nor can his eye be satisfied with wealth; (should he not say) »and for whom do I toil and deny myself from the benefits?« This is also Vanity and an evil notion". 8

Does he not realize that:

ט „טוֹבִים הַשְּׁנַיִם מִן־הָאֶחָד אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ־לָהֶם שָׂכָר טוֹב בַּעֲמָלָם"

"Two are better than one, should they have good profit for their efforts". 9

Why does he not take a companion unto himself? They would double their joys in success; and in case of distress —

י "כִּי אִם־יִפֹּלוּ הָאֶחָד יָקִים אֶת־חֲבֵרוֹ וְאִילוּ הָאֶחָד שֶׁיִּפֹּל וְאֵין שֵׁנִי לַהֲקִימוֹ"

10 "For, should they fall, the one will raise up his neighbor; but woe to him if it is the one that falls: he has no other to lift him up".

יא "גַּם אִם־יִשְׁכְּבוּ שְׁנַיִם וְחַם לָהֶם וּלְאֶחָד אֵיךְ יֵחָם"

11 "Also: if two will lie together, it will be warm to (both of) them; but to the one, how can he become warm?"

יב "וְאִם־יִתְקְפוֹ הָאֶחָד הַשְּׁנַיִם יַעַמְדוּ נֶגְדּוֹ וְהַחוּט הַמְשֻׁלָּשׁ לֹא בִמְהֵרָה יִנָּתֵק"

12 "And if the one should attack, the two can stand against him; and the three-stranded cord cannot readily be broken".

If the companion be a loving wife, it is still better; because it may result in a child which will grow up to be his help, and which the Lecturer characterizes as a three-stranded cord.

As the Lecturer is now considering the child he muses and says:

יג "טוֹב יֶלֶד מִסְכֵּן וְחָכָם מִמֶּלֶךְ זָקֵן וּכְסִיל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַע לְהִזָּהֵר עוֹד"

13 "Better a poor child and wise, than an old king and fool, that no longer knows to care for himself".

יד "כִּי־מִבֵּית הָסוּרִים יָצָא לִמְלֹךְ כִּי גַם בְּמַלְכוּתוֹ נוֹלַד רָשׁ"

14 "For from the prison did he go out to reign, for even in his reign was poverty born".

טו "רָאִיתִי אֶת־כָּל־הַחַיִּים הַמְהַלְּכִים תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עִם הַיֶּלֶד הַשֵּׁנִי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמֹד תַּחְתָּיו"

15 "I noticed all the living that are following beneath the sun with the child, the second one, that will succeed him".

טז „אֵין־קֵץ לְכָל־הָעָם לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה לִפְנֵיהֶם גַּם הָאַחֲרוֹנִים לֹא יִשְׂמְחוּ־בוֹ
כִּי־גַם־זֶה הֶבֶל וְרַעְיוֹן רוּחַ"

"There is no end to all the people: to all that have existed be- 16
fore them; and also the later ones will find no happiness in him,
for this also is Vanity and an empty thought".

The Lecturer muses on the child and his progenitor and says:

The poor helpless child who has just left the prison of his mother's womb, assisted by the wise man, is destined to reign, and the entire world will be in sympathy with him and follow him, though his reign will not last long. He will also cease to be a joy to his age, like his father the old King, who was beset by the fool and could no longer care for himself, and poverty was born in his greatest affluence.

Since we must come to God for His Grace, as our efforts do not insure us against the vicissitudes of life, and as happiness is but a gift of God, I advise thee, when thou goest to the house of God, to —

יז „שְׁמֹר רַגְלְךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר תֵּלֵךְ אֶל־בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים וְקָרוֹב לִשְׁמֹעַ מִתֵּת הַכְּסִילִים זָבַח
כִּי־אֵינָם יוֹדְעִים לַעֲשׂוֹת רָע"

"Watch thy step as thou goest to the house of God, and be ready 17
to obey with those who do not know how to commit evil (rather)
than give the sacrifice of the fools".

It is better that thou be innocent of sin rather than be obliged to propitiate for sins committed. Transpose sentence to read וקרוב לשמע כי אינם יודעים לעשות רע מתת הכסילים זבח.

## CHAPTER V

א „אַל תְּבַהֵל עַל־פִּיךָ וְלִבְּךָ אַל־יְמַהֵר לְהוֹצִיא דָבָר לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים בַּשָּׁמַיִם וְאַתָּה עַל־הָאָרֶץ עַל־כֵּן יִהְיוּ דְבָרֶיךָ מְעַטִּים"

1 "Do not be impetuous in thy speech; nor let thy heart hasten to bring forth a word before the Lord; for God is in the Heavens and thou art on the earth; therefore, let thy words be few".

Do not think He is too distant from thee to take note of what thou art saying, but on the contrary, for that very reason, let thy words be few.

ב „כִּי בָא הַחֲלוֹם בְּרֹב עִנְיָן וְקוֹל כְּסִיל בְּרֹב דְּבָרִים"

2 "For as the dream cometh with many (irrelevant) thoughts, thus is the voice of the fool (heard) through much (irrelevant) speech".

ג „כַּאֲשֶׁר תִּדֹּר נֶדֶר לֵאלֹהִים אַל־תְּאַחֵר לְשַׁלְּמוֹ כִּי אֵין חֵפֶץ בַּכְּסִילִים אֵת אֲשֶׁר־תִּדֹּר שַׁלֵּם"

3 "When thou makest a vow before the Lord, do not delay paying it, for there is no desire for fools; (but) what thou hast vowed, pay":

ד „טוֹב אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִדֹּר מִשֶּׁתִּדּוֹר וְלֹא תְשַׁלֵּם"

4 "It is better that thou shouldst not vow, rather than make a vow and not pay it".

ה „אַל־תִּתֵּן אֶת־פִּיךָ לַחֲטִיא אֶת־בְּשָׂרֶךָ וְאַל־תֹּאמַר לִפְנֵי הַמַּלְאָךְ כִּי שְׁגָגָה הִיא לָמָּה יִקְצֹף הָאֱלֹהִים עַל־קוֹלֶךָ וְחִבֵּל אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ"

5 "Do not permit thy mouth to injure thy flesh, and do not say before the messenger that it was an error. Why should the Judge be angry at thy voice and destroy the work of thy hands?"

Do not permit the vow that leaves thy mouth to injure thee. It is best that thou dost not vow, than vow and protest before the messenger or vow-collector that thou didst vow in error. Why shouldst thou be sued for the vow, and the judge decree that thy property be sold to make good thy vow?

Those thoughtless vows are —

ו „כִּי בְרֹב חֲלֹמוֹת וַהֲבָלִים וּדְבָרִים הַרְבֵּה כִּי אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים יְרָא"

6 "For, through much dreams and nonsense and many words, rather fear God".

And be ready to obey with the innocent ones who are guiltless from doing wrong, rather than be obliged to propitiate thy God with sacrifices for sins committed, along with the other fools. Watch thy step, therefore, as thou goest in the House of God; and if things appear inexplicable to thee do not give way to despair:

ז „אִם־עֹשֶׁק רָשׁ וְגֵזֶל מִשְׁפָּט וָצֶדֶק תִּרְאֶה בַּמְּדִינָה אַל־תִּתְמַהּ עַל־הַחֵפֶץ כִּי גָבֹהַּ מֵעַל גָּבֹהַּ שֹׁמֵר וּגְבֹהִים עֲלֵיהֶם"

7 "Souldst thou see in the province persecutions of the poor and the robbing of judgment and justice, do not be surprised at the incident, for the Highest One over all the high ones keeps guard, and there are higher ones over them".

Do not be shocked at the apparent anarchy that exists, the persecution of the poor that goes unpunished, or the miscarriage of justice; for God, who is the Highest over all the high ones, always keeps watch, and He delegates His protection and retribution to be meted out by people (or circumstances) who are higher and more powerful than the persecutors or the corrupt justices.

Besides, no one condition in life is all advantages, as it may appear to you; nor is there a condition that is so evil that it has not its corresponding advantage.

ח „וְיִתְרוֹן אֶרֶץ בַּכֹּל הוּא מֶלֶךְ לְשָׂדֶה נֶעֱבָד"

8 "And the earth in everything has an advantage. A King is a slave to the field".

There is an advantage and a corresponding disadvantage in any condition of life. For instance, a King, the very highest form of immunity from want, is nevertheless a slave to the field to produce his food.

A King's position, though glorious, carries also its responsibilities as, for instance, when he is obliged to serve in the field of battle.

ט „אֹהֵב כֶּסֶף לֹא־יִשְׂבַּע כֶּסֶף וּמִי־אֹהֵב בָּהָמוֹן לֹא תְבוּאָה גַּם־זֶה הָבֶל"

9 "He who loves money cannot satisfy (his love for) money, and he who loves the plaudits of the populace, same does not reach him: this also is Vanity".

י "בִּרְבוֹת הַטּוֹבָה רַבּוּ אוֹכְלֶיהָ וּמַה־כִּשְׁרוֹן לִבְעָלֶיהָ כִּי אִם־רְאוֹת עֵינָיו"

10 "When the benefits are increased, their consumers are increased. What properly remains to their owner but only the sight of his eyes?"

Of what use is the love for wealth, if the love for wealth cannot be satisfied? and if the plaudits of the populace cannot be controlled, why be obsessed by a craving which cannot be satisfied? And even if one has amassed the good things in life, a great organization is necessary to hold them and with him enjoy the benefits. What more does the actual owner have, but to look at it and be conscious of his ownership?

On the other hand:

יא "מְתוּקָה שְׁנַת הָעֹבֵד אִם־מְעַט וְאִם־הַרְבֵּה יֹאכֵל וְהַשָּׂבָע לָעָשִׁיר אֵינֶנּוּ מַנִּיחַ לוֹ לִישֹׁן"

11 "Sweet is the sleep of the laborer, if he eat little or much, while the surfeit to the rich does not permit him to sleep".

יב "יֵשׁ רָעָה חוֹלָה רָאִיתִי תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ עֹשֶׁר שָׁמוּר לִבְעָלָיו לְרָעָתוֹ"

12 "There is an evil disease that I noticed beneath the sun, the case, where wealth is saved for its owner's injury".

יג "וְאָבַד הָעֹשֶׁר הַהוּא בְּעִנְיַן רָע וְהוֹלִיד בֵּן וְאֵין בְּיָדוֹ מְאוּמָה"

13 "And such wealth was lost through bad speculation, and he had born a son and hath nothing in his possession".

יד "כַּאֲשֶׁר יָצָא מִבֶּטֶן אִמּוֹ עָרוֹם יָשׁוּב לָלֶכֶת כְּשֶׁבָּא וּמְאוּמָה לֹא־יִשָּׂא בַעֲמָלוֹ שֶׁיּוֹלֵךְ בְּיָדוֹ"

14 "As naked as he came forth from his mother's womb, does he continue to go as he came, and nothing that he may carry in his hands does he put aside (as a reward) for his toil".

Transpose sentence to read ומאומה שילך בידו לא ישא בעמלו.

He did not enjoy his wealth when he had it. He saved it for a time of necessity, congratulated himself that his wealth will belong to his son, who will be saved the struggles he went through to obtain it; and just then poor business overtook him, the wealth was lost, and the son finds himself naked as when he left his mother's womb. Such a condition is worse than if the son had fitted himself for the struggles of life without depending on his father's wealth.

טו „וְגַם־זֹה רָעָה חוֹלָה כָּל־עֲמַת שֶׁבָּא כֵּן יֵלֵךְ וּמַה־יִּתְרוֹן לוֹ שֶׁיַּעֲמֹל לָרוּחַ"

"And this also is an evil disease: in the same way that it may come thus may it also go; and what advantage is there to him that he should toil for the wind?" 15

This is a disease inherent in the wealth itself.

טז „גַּם כָּל־יָמָיו בַּחֹשֶׁךְ יֹאכֵל וְכָעַס הַרְבֵּה וְחָלְיוֹ וָקָצֶף"

"Also that he should have wasted his days in self-denial and much grief and illness and anger". 16

יז „הִנֵּה אֲשֶׁר־רָאִיתִי אֲנִי טוֹב אֲשֶׁר־יָפֶה לֶאֱכוֹל וְלִשְׁתּוֹת וְלִרְאוֹת טוֹבָה בְּכָל־עֲמָלוֹ שֶׁיַּעֲמֹל תַּחַת־הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ מִסְפַּר יְמֵי־חַיָּיו אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי־הוּא חֶלְקוֹ"

"Behold: What I myself have noticed to be best, that it is proper to eat and drink, and experience the benefit for all his toil, that he has worked the numbered days of his life that God has given him under the sun, provided such be his portion". 17

Transpose sentence to read שיעמל מספר ימי היו אשר נתן לו האלהים תחת השמש כי הוא חלקו.

יח „גַּם כָּל־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים עֹשֶׁר וּנְכָסִים וְהִשְׁלִיטוֹ לֶאֱכֹל מִמֶּנּוּ וְלָשֵׂאת אֶת־חֶלְקוֹ וְלִשְׂמֹחַ בַּעֲמָלוֹ זֶה מַתַּת אֱלֹהִים הִיא"

"Also (noticed) that every man, to whom God hath given wealth and property, and permitted him to eat therefrom, and to carry away his portion and to be happy with his work: that is a gift of God". 18

יט „כִּי לֹא הַרְבֵּה יִזְכֹּר אֶת־יְמֵי חַיָּיו כִּי הָאֱלֹהִים מַעֲנֶה בְּשִׂמְחַת לִבּוֹ"

"Though there is not many (such a one) that would bring to mind in the days of his life, that the Lord interests himself in the joy of his heart". 19

Many forget the evanescence of wealth, and few realize that they have God to thank for not only the wealth, but also for the privilege and capacity of enjoying it.

## CHAPTER VI

א „יֵשׁ רָעָה אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתִי תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וְרַבָּה הִיא עַל־הָאָדָם"

1 "There is an evil that I have seen under the sun and it comes in many forms over man".

One case:

ב „אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִתֶּן־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים עֹשֶׁר וּנְכָסִים וְכָבוֹד וְאֵינֶנּוּ חָסֵר לְנַפְשׁוֹ מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר־
יִתְאַוֶּה וְלֹא־יַשְׁלִיטֶנּוּ הָאֱלֹהִים לֶאֱכֹל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי אִישׁ נָכְרִי יֹאכְלֶנּוּ זֶה הֶבֶל וְחֳלִי
רָע הוּא"

2 "A man to whom the Lord hath given wealth, property and glory, and who does not deny himself from all he may desire, but the Lord does not empower him to eat therefrom, but a strange man eats therefrom: this is Vanity and an evil disease".

This instability is an evil inherent in wealth itself. One may acquire it, decide to reap its benefits, but some stranger robs him of it.

Another case:

ג „אִם־יוֹלִיד אִישׁ מֵאָה וְשָׁנִים רַבּוֹת יִחְיֶה וְרַב שְׁנֵיו וְנַפְשׁוֹ לֹא־תִשְׂבַּע
מִן־הַטּוֹבָה וְגַם־קְבוּרָה לֹא־הָיְתָה לוֹ אָמַרְתִּי טוֹב מִמֶּנּוּ הַנָּפֶל"

3 "Should a man have born to him a hundred (children) and should he live many years, and how full the days of his years may be; if his soul is not satisfied from the benefits, and so long as he has not yet been buried, — I said (of such a one): the still-born is better off than he".

ד „כִּי־בַהֶבֶל בָּא וּבַחֹשֶׁךְ יֵלֵךְ וּבַחֹשֶׁךְ שְׁמוֹ יְכֻסֶּה"

4 "Who cometh in Vanity an traveleth in darkness, and whose name will be covered by the darkness".

ה „גַּם־שֶׁמֶשׁ לֹא־רָאָה וְלֹא יָדָע נַחַת לָזֶה מִזֶּה"

"Who hath not even seen the sun, and could not distinguish the satisfaction (derived) to this from that". 5

Another case:

ו "וְאִלּוּ חָיָה אֶלֶף שָׁנִים פַּעֲמַיִם וְטוֹבָה לֹא רָאָה הֲלֹא אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶחָד הַכֹּל הוֹלֵךְ"

"And should one live twice one thousand years, if he did not see the benefits, is it not to the one place that they all go?" 6

The one case, where he has every means of enjoyment given to him, but his possessions are taken from him by a stranger; or he looks forward to strangers inheriting him, as he has no children who would inherit him; or the following case:

Where he has children, lives many years, his days are full of wealth and glory, but he has a voracious unsatisfying desire for more wealth and more glory, which prevents him from enjoying his moments of happiness, and he continually looks forward to the gratification of joys not yet gratified. Such a one, as long as he lives and until he will have been buried, is in a worse plight than the still-born child who came in Vanity, passes in darkness, and whose name the darkness will cover, who did not see the sun and could not distinguish between one or the other of the joys of life.

Or the following case:

Where one had a long life and saw no improvement nor development therein, he is like unto the still-born child, and both go to the same oblivion. What use did he make of his long life?

ז „כָּל־עֲמַל הָאָדָם לְפִיהוּ וְגַם־הַנֶּפֶשׁ לֹא תִמָּלֵא"

"All the effort of man is according to the individual, nor can desire be satisfied". 7

Or it may be translated:

"All the efforts of man is for his mouth, nor can desire be filled."

Each man's individual temperament determines his efforts, but that does not satisfy even himself.

ח „כִּי מַה־יּוֹתֵר לֶחָכָם מִן־הַכְּסִיל מַה־לֶּעָנִי יוֹדֵעַ לַהֲלֹךְ נֶגֶד הַחַיִּים"

8 "For what does the wise man possess more than the fool: what should the wretch know, to go against (the vicissitudes of) life?"

ט „טוֹב מַרְאֵה עֵינַיִם מֵהֲלַךְ־נָפֶשׁ גַּם־זֶה הֶבֶל וּרְעוּת רוּחַ"

9 "The sight of the eyes is better than uncontrolled desire. This also is Vanity and a breaking of the spirit".

Though I said before that, though the owner gathers the wealth, his organization consumes it, and the owner has only the sense of ownership, and the privilege of looking after it: even that is much better than self-indulgence, which is also vain, and more dispiriting.

י „מַה־שֶּׁהָיָה כְּבָר נִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ וְנוֹדָע אֲשֶׁר־הוּא אָדָם וְלֹא־יוּכַל לָדִין עִם שֶׁהַתַּקִּיף מִמֶּנּוּ"

10 "What has been, has long been called by name and appreciated according to the individual; and one cannot strive against what is more powerful than himself".

Since everything that is, has been, and since everything has already been catalogued, though every individual experiences it differently, yet the established noumena is too powerful for weak man to strive against:

יא „כִּי יֵשׁ־דְּבָרִים הַרְבֵּה מַרְבִּים הֶבֶל מַה־יֹּתֵר לָאָדָם"

11 "Since there are many circumstances that cause an increase of Vanity, what advantage has man?"

יב „כִּי מִי־יוֹדֵעַ מַה־טּוֹב לָאָדָם בַּחַיִּים מִסְפַּר יְמֵי־חַיֵּי הֶבְלוֹ וְיַעֲשֵׂם כַּצֵּל אֲשֶׁר מִי־יַגִּיד לָאָדָם מַה־יִּהְיֶה אַחֲרָיו תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

12 "For who knows what is best for man, that he should do with his life the numbered days of his life of Vanity, which is like a shadow under the sun? For who will tell the man what will be after him?"

(The sentence should be transposed to read: כי מי יודע מה טוב לאדם ויעשם בחיים מספר ימי חיי הבלו כצל אשר מי יגיד לאדם מה יהיה אחריו).

It is similiar to the sentence: כה אמר ד׳ ליעקב אשר פדה את אברהם. "Thus sayeth the Lord unto Jacob who hath saved Abraham".

Which should be transposed to read: כה אמר ד׳ אשר פדה את אברהם ליעקב: "Thus sayeth the Lord (who hath saved Abraham) unto Jacob."

The book of Qoheleth seems to require many such transpositions of sentences.

It is quite possible that the Talmud preferred not to consider the fact that such philological changes exist in the Hebrew language: for the Talmud asks: וכי יעקב פדה את אברהם — "Did Jacob save Abraham?"

## CHAPTER VII

Since man is helpless to determine a course of action and is the sport of conditions and circumstances over which he has no control, I came to the conclusion that:

א „טוֹב שֵׁם מִשֶּׁמֶן טוֹב וְיוֹם הַמָּוֶת מִיּוֹם הִוָּלְדוֹ"

1 "Better the name than the good oil, and the day of death than the day of his birth".

The name that one leaves at death is better than the good oil that he was anointed with at birth.

ב „טוֹב לָלֶכֶת אֶל־בֵּית־אֵבֶל מִלֶּכֶת אֶל־בֵּית מִשְׁתֶּה בַּאֲשֶׁר הוּא סוֹף כָּל־הָאָדָם
וְהַחַי יִתֵּן אֶל־לִבּוֹ"

2 "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, since it is the end of man, and the living will take it to heart".

ג „טוֹב כַּעַס מִשְּׂחוֹק כִּי־בְרַע פָּנִים יִיטַב לֵב"

3 "Seriousness is better than frivolity, for through the sad face is the heart improved".

ד „לֵב חֲכָמִים בְּבֵית אֵבֶל וְלֵב כְּסִילִים בְּבֵית שִׂמְחָה"

4 "The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of the fool is in the house of joy".

ה „טוֹב לִשְׁמֹעַ גְּעָרַת חָכָם מֵאִישׁ שֹׁמֵעַ שִׁיר כְּסִילִים"

5 "It is better to heed the admonishings of the wise man, than for a man to listen to the song of fools".

ו „כִּי כְקוֹל הַסִּירִים תַּחַת הַסִּיר כֵּן שְׂחוֹק הַכְּסִיל וְגַם־זֶה הָבֶל"

6 "For as the sound of the thorn twigs under the pot, thus is the laugh of the fools; but this also is Vanity".

For like the sound of the burning thorn, whose twigs are crackling under the pot, is the meaningless laugh of the fool with his Ha! Ha! Neither take in consideration the fact that they are being consumed at the time of the crackling and the laughing.

But—this also is Vanity:

ז „כִּי הָעֹשֶׁק יְהוֹלֵל חָכָם וְיאַבֵּד אֶת־לֵב מַתָּנָה"

"For troubles make the wise man mad and cause him to lose the 7
gifted heart".

Wisdom is also unstable, because misfortune causes the wise man to lose his gifted mind.

The lecturer now imagines himself at the house of mourning, and makes several observations:

ח „טוֹב אַחֲרִית דָּבָר מֵרֵאשִׁיתוֹ טוֹב אֶרֶךְ־רוּחַ מִגְּבַהּ רוּחַ"

"The end of a thing is better than its beginning: 8
A patient spirit is better than a proud spirit".

It is better to find oneself at the end of life, than to face life's burden from the beginning.

A patient spirit to bear all the accidents of life is better than a proud spirit that brooks no opposition, because the one bends when the waves would overwhelm him, while the other fights fruitlessly.

ט „אַל־תְּבַהֵל בְּרוּחֶךָ לִכְעוֹס כִּי כַעַס בְּחֵיק כְּסִילִים יָנוּחַ"

"Do not hasten thy spirit to anger, for anger rests in the lap of 9
the fools".

י „אַל־תֹּאמַר מֶה הָיָה שֶׁהַיָּמִים הָרִאשֹׁנִים הָיוּ טוֹבִים מֵאֵלֶּה כִּי לֹא מֵחָכְמָה שָׁאַלְתָּ עַל־זֶה"

"Do not say: (Alas) what has happened? How much better were 10
the former years than these! Because it is not through wisdom
that thou askest regarding that".

Thou art not fit to judge whether the past is better than the present bereavement; for shouldst thou consider the survivors, the present trouble may prove of advantage, as for instance:

יא „טוֹבָה חָכְמָה עִם־נַחֲלָה וְיֹתֶר לִרְאֵי הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

11 "Wisdom is better (if accompanied) with inheritance, and it offers an advantage to those that see the sun".

יב „כִּי בְצֵל הַחָכְמָה בְּצֵל הַכָּסֶף וְיִתְרוֹן דַּעַת הַחָכְמָה תְּחַיֶּה בְעָלֶיהָ"

12 "For under the protection of wisdom, (also) under the protection of money, (produces) a most advantageous knowledge, (which is) wisdom that can support its possessor".

יג „רְאֵה אֶת־מַעֲשֵׂה הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי מִי יוּכַל לְתַקֵּן אֵת אֲשֶׁר עִוְּתוֹ"

13 "See the work of the Lord, for who can correct what He hath made crooked?"

Behold! This is the work of God: therefore, it must be right, and cannot be improved upon even if it appears wrong to thee.

יד „בְּיוֹם טוֹבָה הֱיֵה בְטוֹב וּבְיוֹם רָעָה רְאֵה גַם אֶת־זֶה לְעֻמַּת־זֶה עָשָׂה הָאֱלֹהִים עַל־דִּבְרַת שֶׁלֹּא יִמְצָא הָאָדָם אַחֲרָיו מְאוּמָה"

14 "In the day when good abounds, be with that good, but look out for the evil day: for the Lord has balanced the one against the other, so that man shall not find fault in any condition after him".

Every thing and condition is evenly balanced; nothing is all good or all bad, and no one's life is all good or all bad; therefore, when good abounds enjoy it, but have in mind the evil day that may come. If thou wilt do so, thou wilt then not be able to upbraid thyself for lack of circumspection.

טו „אֶת־הַכֹּל רָאִיתִי בִּימֵי הֶבְלִי יֵשׁ צַדִּיק אֹבֵד בְּצִדְקוֹ וְיֵשׁ רָשָׁע מַאֲרִיךְ בְּרָעָתוֹ"

15 "Everything have I seen in the days of my Vanity: here is a just man that is destroyed for his justice, and there is a wicked man that carries on in his wickedness".

I have often heard that cry in the house of bereavement about the injustice of Fate.

טז „אַל־תְּהִי צַדִּיק הַרְבֵּה וְאַל־תִּתְחַכַּם יוֹתֵר לָמָּה תִּשּׁוֹמֵם"

16 "Be not overjust, neither make thyself overwise: why shouldst thou be confounded?"

Be not overjust, by exaggerating thy goodness, and appear not overwise by talking meaningless platitudes.

יז „אַל־תִּרְשַׁע הַרְבֵּה וְאַל־תְּהִי סָכָל לָמָּה תָמוּת בְּלֹא עִתֶּךָ"

"Do not be too wicked and do not be a fool: why shouldst thou die, when thy time is not yet?" 17

And do not believe, because it often appears that the wicked carry on in their wickedness, that it is profitable to be wicked; for shouldst thou really decide on such a foolish course, a wicked cause of action, thou art liable to die even before thy allotted time.

יח „טוֹב אֲשֶׁר תֶּאֱחֹז בָּזֶה וְגַם־מִזֶּה אַל־תַּנַּח אֶת־יָדֶךָ כִּי־יְרֵא אֱלֹהִים יֵצֵא אֶת־כֻּלָּם"

"It is good that thou grasp this, and do not loosen thy hand from that; for he that fears God should (be able to) meet all (conditions)". 18

Keep an open mind and keep thyself ready to meet any condition.

יט „הַחָכְמָה תָּעֹז לֶחָכָם מֵעֲשָׂרָה שַׁלִּיטִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ בָּעִיר"

"Wisdom strengthens the wise man more than the ten rulers that were in the City". 19

Of all thy resources (thy two hands, thy two feet, thy two eyes, thy two ears, thy mouth and nose) — wisdom is thy best help.

כ „כִּי אָדָם אֵין צַדִּיק בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה־טּוֹב וְלֹא יֶחֱטָא"

"For no man is so just in the world who (always) does good and does not (ever) sin". 20

Even an untimely death may be caused by a sin unknown to thee, or to save thee from committing a grievous sin.

כא „גַּם לְכָל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר יְדַבֵּרוּ אַל־תִּתֵּן לִבֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תִשְׁמַע אֶת־עַבְדְּךָ מְקַלְלֶךָּ"

"Also, for all the things that they speak, give not thy heart, as thou dost not heed thy slave when he insults thee". 21

Pay no attention to the words spoken by the bereaved, no more than thou wouldst mind the insults of thy slave:

כב „כִּי גַם־פְּעָמִים רַבּוֹת יָדַע לִבֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר גַּם־אַתָּה קִלַּלְתָּ אֲחֵרִים"

"For thy heart knows, that also many times hast thou insulted others". 22

Dost thou not remember how thou didst abuse others, when thou wast heavy-hearted?

כג „כָּל־זֶה נִסִּיתִי בַחָכְמָה אָמַרְתִּי אֶחְכָּמָה וְהִיא רְחוֹקָה מִמֶּנִּי"

23 "All this have I tested with wisdom. I said, I will become wise, but (Alas!) it is far from me".

Alas! My experiments in the realms of wisdom have not taught me a rule of life.

כד „רָחוֹק מַה־שֶּׁהָיָה וְעָמֹק | עָמֹק מִי יִמְצָאֶנּוּ"

24 "Far is the thing that has been (how can I understand it?); and deep, (very) deep (is the thing that will be): who can grasp it?"

For I could not understand the past, nor could I grasp the future.

כה „סַבּוֹתִי אֲנִי וְלִבִּי לָדַעַת וְלָתוּר וּבַקֵּשׁ חָכְמָה וְחֶשְׁבּוֹן וְלָדַעַת רֶשַׁע כְּסֶל
וְהַסִּכְלוּת הוֹלֵלוֹת"

25 "I turned myself and my heart to know, and to explore, and to demand wisdom and an accounting, and to know the evil that is most foolish and the hilarity that is most stupid".

Since I could not find a positive and infallible rule of life to follow, I at least wished to know which evil is the most foolish, and which hilarity is the most stupid, that I should avoid. Or, rather, looking into my past life I wanted to know what particular folly brought me to this state, where I lost my kingdom, was stripped of my wealth, and must make a precarious existence in exile away from my kith and kindred.

כו „וּמוֹצֵא אֲנִי מַר מִמָּוֶת אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר־הִיא מְצוֹדִים וַחֲרָמִים לִבָּהּ אֲסוּרִים יָדֶיהָ
טוֹב לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים יִמָּלֵט מִמֶּנָּה וְחוֹטֵא יִלָּכֵד בָּהּ"

26 "And I find that more bitter than death is the woman, whose heart is like nets and snares, whose hands are like bonds (manacles). He that is favored before the Lord will escape from her, and he who has missed (his favor) will become entangled by her".

How much more bitter is my lot than death, caused by the women who ensnared me and kept me manacled and helpless. Alas! I have indeed missed the favor of the Lord's protection from that sex.

כח „רְאֵה זֶה מָצָאתִי אָמְרָה קֹהֶלֶת אַחַת לְאַחַת לִמְצֹא חֶשְׁבּוֹן"

"Qoheleth (often) said it: Behold! This I found (counting them out) one by one to prove their account". 27

Growing bitter, Qoheleth used often to repeat that statement, and he would count his wives by name, till he would complete the account of seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines.*

כט „אֲשֶׁר עוֹד־בִּקְשָׁה נַפְשִׁי וְלֹא מָצָאתִי אָדָם אֶחָד מֵאֶלֶף מָצָאתִי וְאִשָּׁה בְּכָל־
אֵלֶּה לֹא מָצָאתִי"

"And what my soul is still looking for, but has not found, one man in a thousand have I found; but a (single) woman in all those (I enumerated) have I not found". 28

I still am not free from the desire and hope of finding the one true woman, whom I could not find in the entire thousand I was already intimate with. I have, however, found one perfect man in a thousand.

ל „לְבַד רְאֵה־זֶה מָצָאתִי אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם יָשָׁר וְהֵמָּה בִקְשׁוּ
חִשְׁבֹנוֹת רַבִּים"

"Excepting, behold! This have I found, that the Lord hath made the (one) perfect man (in a thousand), but they (the rest of that thousand) required to (swell) the great numbers".** 29

That perfect man was surely God-made. He represents quality; the other nine hundred and ninety nine, the self-made men, represent the bulk, the mass necessary to make up the thousand.

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* אמרה as אמר אותה, or אמר אותה המליצה — made it as an epigram frequently repeated.

** as if it were written: את האדם הישר.

## CHAPTER VIII

א „מִי כְהֶחָכָם וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ פֵּשֶׁר דָּבָר חָכְמַת אָדָם תָּאִיר פָּנָיו וְעֹז פָּנָיו יְשֻׁנֶּא"

1 "Who is like unto the wise man? and who knows the explanation of the fact, that the wisdom of a man lights up his face, and the harshness of his features becomes changed?"

Musing on the God-made superman made perfect, he concludes that perfection is the result of wisdom and proves that it is God-given, for the reason of the phenomenal physical change that takes place in the human appearance after acquiring wisdom. How the divine light causes his face to radiate, and how gross features become refined through wisdom! Since wisdom is so desirable, he asks, "What are the prerequisites for the acquiring of wisdom?" and he answers: "First and foremost, discipline!"

ב „אֲנִי פִּי־מֶלֶךְ שְׁמֹר וְעַל דִּבְרַת שְׁבוּעַת אֱלֹהִים"

2 "I obey the edicts of the King and (those) regarding the allegiance due to God".

Even, though I am the King, I must obey my edicts: how much more so the allegiance due to God.

ג „אַל־תִּבָּהֵל מִפָּנָיו תֵּלֵךְ אַל־תַּעֲמֹד בְּדָבָר רָע כִּי כָל־אֲשֶׁר יַחְפֹּץ יַעֲשֶׂה"

3 "Do not impetuously rush to do an evil deed, depart from it, do not remain, for all that He desires will be accomplished".

Do not follow your impulse for evil, on the contrary — flee from it, do not waver, God's will be done, not thine. Transpose sentence to read אל תבהל בדבר רע מפניו תלך אל תעמד כי כל אשר יחפץ יעשה.

ד „בַּאֲשֶׁר דְּבַר־מֶלֶךְ שִׁלְטוֹן וּמִי יֹאמַר־לוֹ מַה־תַּעֲשֶׂה"

4 "Since the word of the King rules, who will dare to tell Him: (God,) what doest thou?"

Since human laws rule, who can oppose God's will?

ה „שׁוֹמֵר מִצְוָה לֹא יֵדַע דָּבָר רָע וְעֵת וּמִשְׁפָּט יֵדַע לֵב חָכָם"

"He who follows the precepts will not experience an evil condition, 5
because the heart of the wise man knows that there is a fixed
time and judgment".

If thou wilt obey God's laws and follow his precepts, thou wilt be saved from evil experience. The wise man knows that the world is harmoniously administered, there are unalterable circumstances, and justice must rule.

ו „כִּי לְכָל־חֵפֶץ יֵשׁ עֵת וּמִשְׁפָּט כִּי־רָעַת הָאָדָם רַבָּה עָלָיו"

"For, for everything there exists a fixed time, and a judgment 6
(sentence) as soon as the evil of man becomes increased over
(what is permitted) him (to do)".

Sentence for evil committed must follow under retributive circumstances, when the time becomes ripe for retribution.

ז "כִּי־אֵינֶנּוּ יֹדֵעַ מַה־שֶּׁיִּהְיֶה כִּי כַאֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה מִי יַגִּיד לוֹ"

"Excepting, that he does not know what it will be; for when it 7
(retribution) does happen, who will tell him?"

But, when retribution comes, he does not know that it is a specific sentence for a specific wrong act committed by him; and there is none to point it out to him.

ח „אֵין אָדָם שַׁלִּיט בָּרוּחַ לִכְלוֹא אֶת־הָרוּחַ וְאֵין שִׁלְטוֹן בְּיוֹם הַמָּוֶת וְאֵין מְשַׁלַּחַת בַּמִּלְחָמָה וְלֹא־יְמַלֵּט רֶשַׁע אֶת־בְּעָלָיו"

"No man can rule over his spirit to confine that spirit. There is 8
no controlling the day of death. No substitute can be sent in that
war; and (the fruits of) evil cannot permit its owner to escape".

Retribution may come in many forms. The inability of man to master himself may lead to his undoing. Certainly it must be conceded that death cannot be controlled. Every man must fight his own battle of life, and the accumulation of wealth through an evil life will not save its owner.

ט „אֶת־כָּל־זֶה רָאִיתִי וְנָתוֹן אֶת־לִבִּי לְכָל־מַעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ עֵת
אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַט הָאָדָם בְּאָדָם לְרַע לוֹ"

9 "All this have I perceived, when I gave over my heart to all the deeds that are being done under the sun, at the time when man rules over man to his injury".

These reflections were made by me when I considered how man rules another and exploits him.

י „וּבְכֵן רָאִיתִי רְשָׁעִים קְבֻרִים וָבָאוּ וּמִמְּקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ יְהַלֵּכוּ וְיִשְׁתַּכְּחוּ בָּעִיר אֲשֶׁר
כֵּן־עָשׂוּ גַּם־זֶה הָבֶל"

10 "But, in truth, I have seen wicked men, buried (in their wickedness), who had entirely departed from their holy state — and they came and were found in the City as if they acted properly. This also is Vanity".

This sentence should be transposed to read: ובכן ראיתי רשעים קברים וממקום קדוש יהלכו ובאו וישתכחו בעיר אשר כן עשו גם זה הבל.

I have, however, found wicked people steeped in their wickedness, who have entirely departed from their holy state, but who came to the City and are found living as peaceful a life as if they had acted properly. This, therefore, is also Vanity.

יא „אֲשֶׁר אֵין־נַעֲשָׂה פִתְגָם מַעֲשֵׂה הָרָעָה מְהֵרָה עַל־כֵּן מָלֵא לֵב בְּנֵי־הָאָדָם בָּהֶם
לַעֲשׂוֹת רָע"

11 "Because the decree for the evil deed is not immediately made for them. For that reason does the heart of the sons of man dare to do wrong".

This should be transposed to read: אשר אין נעשה פתגם מעשה הרעה מהרה בהם על כן מלא לב בני האדם לעשות רע.

Because the punishment does not immediately follow the crime, the wicked think there will be no punishment.

יב „אֲשֶׁר חֹטֶא עֹשֶׂה רָע מְאַת וּמַאֲרִיךְ לוֹ כִּי גַם־יוֹדֵעַ אֲנִי אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה־טּוֹב לִירֵאֵי
הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יִרְאוּ מִלְּפָנָיו"

12 "Because the wicked will commit a hundred sins to those that fear God, and it (the punishment) is delayed to him. Thou h I also know that good will happen to those that have respect for Him".

Transpose sentence to read: אשר חטא עשה רע מאת ליראי האלהים ומאריך לו כי גם יודע אני אשר יהיה טוב אשר יראו מלפניו.

יג „וְטוֹב לֹא־יִהְיֶה לָרָשָׁע וְלֹא־יַאֲרִיךְ יָמִים כַּצֵּל אֲשֶׁר אֵינֶנּוּ יָרֵא מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהִים"

"And good will not happen to the wicked that does not fear God, 13
nor will he lengthen his days, like a shadow".

This should be transposed to read: טוב לא יהיה לרשע אשר איננו ירא מלפני אלהים ולא יאריך ימים כצל.

That good will not happen to the wicked, nor will he have a long and happy life, but he will pass away like a shadow forgotten by all, as if he never existed.

יד „יֶשׁ־הֶבֶל אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ו יֵשׁ צַדִּיקִים אֲשֶׁר מַגִּיעַ אֲלֵהֶם כְּמַעֲשֵׂה הָרְשָׁעִים וְיֵשׁ רְשָׁעִים שֶׁמַּגִּיעַ אֲלֵהֶם כְּמַעֲשֵׂה הַצַּדִּיקִים אָמַרְתִּי שֶׁגַּם־זֶה הָבֶל"

"There is a vanity that happens on the earth, where there are just 14
men to whom is meted out as for the deeds of evil men, and
there are evil men to whom is meted out as for the deeds of just
men. So I determined that this also is Vanity".

One may be evil, and does not suffer even in his reputation; one may be good, and suffers as if he committed evil even in the eyes of public opinion.

טו „וְשִׁבַּחְתִּי אֲנִי אֶת־הַשִּׂמְחָה אֲשֶׁר אֵין־טוֹב לָאָדָם תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ כִּי אִם־לֶאֱכֹל וְלִשְׁתּוֹת וְלִשְׂמוֹחַ וְהוּא יִלְוֶנּוּ בַעֲמָלוֹ יְמֵי חַיָּיו אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

"And I commended happiness, (saying) that there is nothing better 15
for a man beneath the sun, than to eat and drink and be happy,
and this should accompany him in his employment, the days of
life that the Lord hath given him under the sun".

I came to the conclusion that happiness is the one thing to cultivate and to look forward to; because wisdom failed to teach me a better rule for life.

טז „כַּאֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי אֶת־לִבִּי לָדַעַת חָכְמָה וְלִרְאוֹת אֶת־הָעִנְיָן אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה עַל־הָאָרֶץ
כִּי גַם בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה שֵׁנָה בְּעֵינָיו אֵינֶנּוּ רֹאֶה"

"For I had (previously) applied mine heart to know wisdom and 16
to perceive the Idea (and purpose that moves everything) that is

being done upon the earth: for (which absorbing application) neither by day nor by night doth one see sleep with his eyes''.

יז ״וְרָאִיתִי אֶת־כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂה הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי לֹא יוּכַל הָאָדָם לִמְצוֹא אֶת־הַמַּעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה תַּחַת־הַשָּׁמֶשׁ בְּשֶׁל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמֹל הָאָדָם לְבַקֵּשׁ וְלֹא יִמְצָא וְגַם אִם־יֹאמַר הֶחָכָם לָדַעַת לֹא יוּכַל לִמְצֹא״

17 "And I saw that everything (was) the works of the Lord; because it is impossible for man to grasp the work that is being done under the sun. No matter how much a man will labor to seek, he will not find it, and even if the wise man should determine to know, he will not be able to reach it''.

## CHAPTER IX

א „כִּי אֶת־כָּל־זֶה נָתַתִּי אֶל־לִבִּי וְלָבוּר אֶת־כָּל־זֶה אֲשֶׁר הַצַּדִּיקִים וְחַכָמִים
וַעֲבָדֵיהֶם בְּיַד הָאֱלֹהִים גַּם־אַהֲבָה גַם־שִׂנְאָה אֵין יוֹדֵעַ הָאָדָם הַכֹּל לִפְנֵיהֶם"

"For all of that have I given over to my heart, also to clarify all 1
of this, that the just and the wise and their services are in the
power of the Lord:
Even Love! Even Hate! Man does not experience, everything is
placed before them".

I vainly endeavored to reconcile the inexplicable, and noticed how even the best people are deprived of their volition; everything, even the value of their services to the Community, is placed before them, circumstances govern their actions; even such an abstract thing as love or hate a man does not experience of his own volition, but he loves or hates whether he wills it or not.

ב „הַכֹּל כַּאֲשֶׁר לַכֹּל מִקְרֶה אֶחָד לַצַּדִּיק וְלָרָשָׁע לַטּוֹב וְלַטָּהוֹר וְלַטָּמֵא וְלַזֹּבֵחַ
וְלַאֲשֶׁר אֵינֶנּוּ זֹבֵחַ כַּטּוֹב כַּחֹטֵא הַנִּשְׁבָּע כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁבוּעָה יָרֵא"

"Everything is as if it were for everybody, the one event happens 2
to the just and to the wicked, to the good, and to the pure, and
to the defiled, to the one that sacrifices, as well as to the one that
does not sacrifice. The good is the same as the sinner; the one
that is put under oath as the one that fears an oath".

Everything appears to be haphazard.

ג „זֶה רָע בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־נַעֲשָׂה תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ כִּי־מִקְרֶה אֶחָד לַכֹּל וְגַם לֵב בְּנֵי־הָאָדָם
מָלֵא־רָע וְהוֹלֵלוֹת בִּלְבָבָם בְּחַיֵּיהֶם וְאַחֲרָיו אֶל־הַמֵּתִים"

"This is an evil in all that is being done under the sun, that there 3
is the one event to all; and also the heart of the sons of man be-
comes filled with wickedness, and madness is in their hearts (when
they probe in contemplation) of their lives and after that turn their
reflections to the dead".

There seems to be a defect in the governing of the world, by reason of there appearing to be the one accident to all. It has the effect of making men sinful, seeing that there is no discrimination; and they become filled with despair and madness when they contemplate their lives, and when they contemplate the dead it is even worse.

ד „כִּי־מִי אֲשֶׁר יְחֻבַּר אֶל כָּל־הַחַיִּים יֵשׁ בִּטָּחוֹן כִּי־לְכֶלֶב חַי הוּא טוֹב מִן־הָאַרְיֵה
הַמֵּת"

4 "For he who is still connected with all the living has the conviction that the live dog fares better than the dead lion".

ה „כִּי הַחַיִּים יוֹדְעִים שֶׁיָּמֻתוּ וְהַמֵּתִים אֵינָם יוֹדְעִים מְאוּמָה וְאֵין־עוֹד לָהֶם שָׂכָר כִּי
נִשְׁכַּח זִכְרָם"

5 "For the living have (at least) the knowledge that they will die, while the dead do not know anything, nor can they acquire reward, since their record has become forgotten".

ו „גַּם אַהֲבָתָם גַּם־שִׂנְאָתָם גַּם־קִנְאָתָם כְּבָר אָבָדָה וְחֵלֶק אֵין־לָהֶם עוֹד לְעוֹלָם
בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־נַעֲשָׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

6 "Even their loves, even their hates, even their zeal have already been lost; and forever will they have no longer any share in what is happening under the sun".

Death assuredly seems no refuge, for there seems to be a conviction that a petty life is better than none; even though the living cannot prevent their fate they are at least conscious, and while they live they might accomplish something; but the record is surely closed after death.

We must, therefore, go back to the contemplation of the living, and I advise thee:

ז „לֵךְ אֱכֹל בְּשִׂמְחָה לַחְמֶךָ וּשְׁתֵה בְלֵב־טוֹב יֵינֶךָ כִּי כְבָר רָצָה הָאֱלֹהִים
אֶת־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ"

7 "Go and eat thy bread with joy and drink thy wine with a happy heart: for from time remote hath the Lord willed thy deeds".

With the assurance that thou canst not solve the riddle of life, thou canst afford to be happy in the consciousness that from time remote hath the Lord appointed thee to live and do thy work.

ח „בְּכָל־עֵת יִהְיוּ בְגָדֶיךָ לְבָנִים וְשֶׁמֶן עַל־רֹאשְׁךָ אַל־יֶחְסָר"

"At all times should thy garments be white, nor shouldst thou miss 8
the oil over thy head".

Both physically and spiritually be as near clean and pure as possible.

ט „רְאֵה חַיִּים עִם־אִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר־אָהַבְתָּ כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֵּי הֶבְלֶךָ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לְךָ תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ
כָּל יְמֵי הֶבְלֶךָ כִּי הוּא חֶלְקְךָ בַּחַיִּים וּבַעֲמָלְךָ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה עָמֵל תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

"Live joyfully with the wife that thou lovest all the days of thy 9
life of Vanity that He hath given thee under the sun, if such be
thy portion in life, and with thy possessions for which thou art
toiling all thy days of Vanity under the sun".

If thou art fortunate enough to possess a wife that thou lovest, be happy with her, and keep up thy interest in thy work, and be happy therewith.

Sentence should be transposed to read: ראה חיים עם אשה אשר אהבת אשר נתן לך כל ימי חיי הבלך תחת השמש כי הוא חלקך בחיים ובעמלך אשר אתה עמל כל ימי הבלך תחת השמש.

י „כֹּל אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא יָדְךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּכֹחֲךָ עֲשֵׂה כִּי אֵין מַעֲשֶׂה וְחֶשְׁבּוֹן וְדַעַת וְחָכְמָה
בִּשְׁאוֹל אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה הֹלֵךְ שָׁמָּה"

"Everything that thy hand is capable of doing whilst thou hast thy 10
strength, do so! For there is no work nor planning, nor knowledge,
nor wisdom (that can serve thee) in the grave towards which thou
art traveling".

יא „שַׁבְתִּי וְרָאָה תַּחַת־הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ כִּי לֹא לַקַּלִּים הַמֵּרוֹץ וְלֹא לַגִּבּוֹרִים הַמִּלְחָמָה וְגַם
לֹא לַחֲכָמִים לֶחֶם וְגַם לֹא לַנְּבֹנִים עֹשֶׁר וְגַם לֹא לַיֹּדְעִים חֵן כִּי־עֵת וָפֶגַע
יִקְרֶה אֶת־כֻּלָּם"

"I turned, taking notice beneath the sun that the race is not (always) 11
to the swift, nor is the battle won by the mighty; neither do the
wise (always) have bread; neither do the men of understanding
(always) have wealth; neither do the well informed (enjoy) grace.
But time and chance happens to all of them".

יב „כִּי גַּם לֹא־יֵדַע הָאָדָם אֶת־עִתּוֹ כַּדָּגִים שֶׁנֶּאֱחָזִים בִּמְצוֹדָה רָעָה וְכַצִּפֳּרִים הָאֲחֻזוֹת
בַּפָּח בָּהֶם יוָקְשִׁים בְּנֵי הָאָדָם לְעֵת רָעָה כְּשֶׁתִּפּוֹל עֲלֵיהֶם פִּתְאֹם"

12 "For no more does man know his time, than the fish that are caught in an evil net; or, than the birds that are caught in the snare. Like them, so are the sons of man overwhelmed by the evil time when it suddenly falls upon them".

יג „גַּם־זֹה רָאִיתִי חָכְמָה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וּגְדוֹלָה הִיא אֵלָי"

13 "I have also seen this phenomenon under the sun, and it was of great importance to me".

He relates an incident from which he has learned several lessons:

יד „עִיר קְטַנָּה וַאֲנָשִׁים בָּהּ מְעָט וּבָא־אֵלֶיהָ מֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל וְסָבַב אֹתָהּ וּבָנָה עָלֶיהָ
מְצוֹדִים גְּדוֹלִים"

14 "There was a small city, and few men within it; and against it came a great King, who besieged it and built against it great bulwarks".

טו „וּמָצָא בָהּ אִישׁ מִסְכֵּן חָכָם וּמִלַּט־הוּא אֶת־הָעִיר בְּחָכְמָתוֹ וְאָדָם לֹא זָכַר אֶת־
הָאִישׁ הַמִּסְכֵּן הַהוּא"

15 "And therein was found a poor wise man, and he caused the city to escape through his wisdom; but no one remembered that poor man".

טז „וְאָמַרְתִּי אֲנִי טוֹבָה חָכְמָה מִגְּבוּרָה וְחָכְמַת הַמִּסְכֵּן בְּזוּיָה וּדְבָרָיו אֵינָם נִשְׁמָעִים"

16 "And I concluded that wisdom was better than strength, and that the wisdom of the poor is despised and his words are not heeded".

The wisdom of that poor wise man was more potent than the powerful great King, because he saved that city; and the wisdom of the poor man is despised and his claims are not heeded, because no one remembered that poor man.

יז „דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים בְּנַחַת נִשְׁמָעִים מִזַּעֲקַת מוֹשֵׁל בַּכְּסִילִים"

17 "The words of the wise, though subdued, are still heard, more so than the alarm of the ruler of the fools".*

But at the crucial moment the words of the wise are still more potent than the call to arms of the ruler, because, after all, they took his advice.

* זעקת in the sense of ויזעק ברק — "and Barak called to arms".

יח „טוֹבָה חָכְמָה מִכְּלֵי קְרָב וְחוֹטֵא אֶחָד יְאַבֵּד טוֹבָה הַרְבֵּה"

"Wisdom is better than weapons of war; and one sinner will cause 18
much good to be wasted".

The wisdom of the poor wise man was more potent than the weapons and bulwarks of the great King. And the one fault that the wise man possessed, which was poverty, caused much good to be wasted; as otherwise he might have continued to rule the state, and benefited both the state and himself; and one sinner influenced the people of that city to disregard the poor wise man's rights.

## CHAPTER X

The people of the city referred to are like:

א „זְבוּבֵי מָוֶת יַבְאִישׁ יַבִּיעַ שֶׁמֶן רוֹקֵחַ יָקָר מֵחָכְמָה מִכָּבוֹד סִכְלוּת מְעָט"

1 "Carrion flies, who despise the apothecary's ointment, and cause it to bubble up: more precious than wisdom, than glory is the little folly".

How the one fault of poverty was the undoing of the city and the poor wise man! The men of the city that the poor wise man saved are like carrion flies, who feed on the festering sore and prefer that to the apothecary's oil, which covers it, and which is much better food for the flies: but in their desire to expose the sore they despise the oil and expel the air-bubbles through their proboscis in their efforts to free themselves from the oil and get at the wound. Thus, in their desire to belittle the services of the poor wise man, they lost sight of the fact of his great wisdom, and the glory that he would reflect on them by leading them. They only remembered his poverty and listened to the gibes of his wicked traducer.

ב „לֵב חָכָם לִימִינוֹ וְלֵב כְּסִיל לִשְׂמֹאלוֹ"

2 "The heart of the wise man is to his right, but the heart of the fool is to his left".

The desire of the wise man is to think and act right. The desire of the fool is to think and act wrong.

ג „וְגַם־בַּדֶּרֶךְ כְּשֶׁהַכְּסִיל הוֹלֵךְ לִבּוֹ חָסֵר וְאָמַר לַכֹּל סָכָל הוּא"

3 "And even while the fool is walking on the road, he lacks heart and proclaims to all that he is a fool".

His heartless demeanor, even while he is travelling, will proclaim the fool in him. The fool referred to is the man of slander and evil tongue, to whom the following sentences will lead up as to a climax:

ד „אִם־רוּחַ הַמּוֹשֵׁל תַּעֲלֶה עָלֶיךָ מְקוֹמְךָ אַל־תַּנַּח כִּי מַרְפֵּא יַנִּיחַ חֲטָאִים גְּדוֹלִים"

"Should the ruling power bring against thee charges of great sins, leave not thy position, for a coward yields". 4

Thou hast been slandered, but stay and await the outcome. Transpose sentence to read: אם רוח המושל תעלה עליך חטאים גדולים מקומך אל תנח כי מרפא יניח.

ה „יֵשׁ רָעָה רָאִיתִי תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ כִּשְׁגָגָה שֶׁיּוֹצֵא מִלִּפְנֵי הַשַּׁלִּיט"

"There is an evil that I noticed under the sun, (that appears) as if an error proceedeth from the Ruler". 5

Incongruities happen that seem as if the Ruler of the world hath permitted those things to happen in error.

ו „נִתַּן הַסִּכְלוּת בַּמְּרוֹמִים רַבִּים וַעֲשִׁירִים בַּשֵּׁפֶל יֵשֵׁבוּ"

"Folly was placed in many high places, while the men of wealth were obliged to sit low". 6

Folly rules, men of substance serve:

ז „רָאִיתִי עֲבָדִים עַל־סוּסִים וְשָׂרִים הֹלְכִים כַּעֲבָדִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ"

"I have seen slaves on horseback, while princes were following on the ground like slaves". 7

ח „חֹפֵר גּוּמָּץ בּוֹ יִפּוֹל וּפֹרֵץ גָּדֵר יִשְׁכְּנוּ נָחָשׁ"

"He who digs the pit, may fall therein, and he who breaks through the fence, may be bitten by a snake". 8

No one should know better, than the one who digs the pit, of the danger of falling therein; and no one should be more alive to the danger of a snake bite, than he who takes the stone fence apart. Yet it often happens that those very people meet with those accidents.

ט „מַסִּיעַ אֲבָנִים יֵעָצֵב בָּהֶם בּוֹקֵעַ עֵצִים יִסָּכֵן בָּם"

"He who removes the stones may become injured through them, and he who splits wood may be endangered through it". 9

Likewise in these two cases, knowing of the danger accompanying the occupation, they should exercise caution and be immune from danger;

but even in the case of the wood-chopper, who exercised extraordinary diligence; as, for instance, even to this extent:

י „אִם־קֵהָה הַבַּרְזֶל וְהוּא לֹא־פָנִים קִלְקַל וַחֲיָלִים יְגַבֵּר וְיִתְרוֹן הַכְשֵׁיר חָכְמָה"

10 "If the iron be dull, and he did not sharpen the edge, nor employ extraordinary effort, who had the advantage of wise preparation".*

Even he was not immune from possible danger; and if one is not immune from such dangers and accidents, how can one save himself from the slanderer?

יא „אִם־יִשֹּׁךְ הַנָּחָשׁ בְּלוֹא־לָחַשׁ וְאֵין יִתְרוֹן לְבַעַל הַלָּשׁוֹן"

11 "Does the snake bite without the (accompanying) hiss? There is no advantage to the man of slanderous tongue".

The same as the snake first whispers by his hiss, then bites, thus does the man of slanderous tongue first whisper calumnies against his neighbor, which he follows by his poisonous slanderous bite.

יב „דִּבְרֵי פִי־חָכָם חֵן וְשִׂפְתוֹת כְּסִיל תְּבַלְּעֶנּוּ"

12 "The words from the wise man's mouth may be full of grace, yet the lips of the fool can destroy him".

The fool and slanderer is synonymously used by the Lecturer. He is especially bitter against him, as his personal suffering was mainly due to that. He calls him fool, because rarely does the slanderer benefit through his slander: as the Talmud paraphrases "ונחש עפר לחמו" "And the snake, earth is his food." Since he can feed on the Earth which is so plentiful, and since he has no sense of taste or discrimination, and all food has the same taste to him as the earth, wherefore then should he go out of his way to destroy the innocent creatures that cross his path?

יג „תְּחִלַּת דִּבְרֵי־פִיהוּ סִכְלוּת וְאַחֲרִית פִּיהוּ הוֹלֵלוּת רָעָה"

13 "The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly, but the end of his speech is wicked madness".

The slanderer starts his conversation by a joke ridiculing his victim, but ends with a vicious attack.

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* As if it were written והוא לא פנים קלקל והוא לא חילים יגבר.

יד „וְהַסָּכָל יַרְבֶּה דְבָרִים לֹא־יֵדַע הָאָדָם מַה־שֶּׁיִּהְיֶה וַאֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה מֵאַחֲרָיו מִי יַגִּיד לוֹ"

"And the fool continues his speech. The man does not know 14
what will be; and what will be from behind him — who will relate
it to him?"

The slanderer keeps on attacking in spite of a just defence made by the victim; and he can not know what will be the outcome of the attack, especially of an attack behind his back.

טו „עֲמַל הַכְּסִילִים תְּיַגְּעֶנּוּ אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַע לָלֶכֶת אֶל־עִיר"

"The work of the fools wearies him, that he does not know (how) 15
to enter any city".

The slanderer has been prolific: כסילים instead of כסיל, there are now many slanderers keeping up the attack. They succeed in wearing him out to such an extent that he is not safe to enter any city.

Realizing his error, how different was his luxurious rule from that of his warlike father, he bitterly reproaches himself:

טז „אִי־לָךְ אֶרֶץ שֶׁמַּלְכֵּךְ נָעַר וְשָׂרַיִךְ בַּבֹּקֶר יֹאכֵלוּ"

"Woe to thee, oh Land whose King is weak, and whose princes 16
feast in the morning".

Woe to the land that is ruled by a weak and luxurious King and counsellors.

יז „אַשְׁרֶיךְ אֶרֶץ שֶׁמַּלְכֵּךְ בֶּן־חוֹרִים וְשָׂרַיִךְ בָּעֵת יֹאכְלוּ בִגְבוּרָה וְלֹא בַשְּׁתִי"

"Happy art thou, oh Land whose King is a man of freedom, and 17
whose princes dispose of their time in valour and not in drink".

Happy was the land in my father's time, when it was ruled by a man who was bold and free, and whose princes were interested in deeds of valour instead of feasting.

יח „בַּעֲצַלְתַּיִם יִמַּךְ הַמָּקֶרֶה וּבְשִׁפְלוּת יָדַיִם יִדְלֹף הַבָּיִת"

"Through laziness does the roof fall down, and through the loosening 18
of hands does the house become flooded".

Through the inactivity of the luxurious King and counsellors does the State go to decay, and through lack of effort to repair the error does the house of State become flooded.

Instead of helping —

יט "לִשְׂחוֹק עֹשִׂים לֶחֶם וְיַיִן יְשַׂמַּח חַיִּים וְהַכֶּסֶף יַעֲנֶה אֶת־הַכֹּל"

19 "They prepare feasts for levity, and wine to enjoy life; but the money must answer for it all".

They make revels and orgies, and the money to pay for it all must be found by inordinately taxing the people.

Why was I not warned of my folly? Because people dare not criticize the great, for thay know that:

כ "גַּם בְּמַדָּעֲךָ מֶלֶךְ אַל־תְּקַלֵּל וּבְחַדְרֵי מִשְׁכָּבְךָ אַל־תְּקַלֵּל עָשִׁיר כִּי עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם יוֹלִיךְ אֶת־הַקּוֹל וּבַעַל הַכְּנָפַיִם יַגִּיד דָּבָר"

20 "Even amongst thy most intimate, thou darest not insult the King; and even in thy secret bed-chamber thou darest not insult the rich: for a bird of the heaven may carry thy voice, and the owner of wings may relate the incident".

## CHAPTER XI

א „שַׁלַּח לַחְמְךָ עַל־פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם כִּי־בְרֹב הַיָּמִים תִּמְצָאֶנּוּ"

"Cast thy bread on the face of the waters, for thou wilt find it in many days". 1

ב „תֶּן־חֵלֶק לְשִׁבְעָה וְגַם לִשְׁמוֹנָה כִּי לֹא תֵדַע מַה־יִּהְיֶה רָעָה עַל־הָאָרֶץ"

"Make a division for seven and even for eight: for thou knowest not, what will be the evil on the land". 2

As thou canst not know the ways of the Lord, thou mayest be sure of one thing: that every act reacts in a long enough cycle. Therefore, take in consideration the definitely unknown element of chance in thy investment; and thou shouldst diversify thy ventures, divide them over the seven seas: yea, even venture on the eighth sea, as thou knowest not the nature of the loss that may reach thee, and where it may attack thee. Or divide thy ventures in many ways: שבעה "seven" meaning the indefinite or the X number in Hebrew, as שבע ביום הללתיך "I have praised thee seven times a day", meaning "many times"; or שבעתים יוקם קין "Cain will be much avenged"; or שבעה יפול צדיק וקם. This is in a line with the Talmud's advice לעולם ישליש אדם את מעותיו "a man should always divide his resources in three ways". "Eight" שמונה is a play on words meaning "even more than many", very many. שבעה is derived from the Hebrew שובע plenty: שמונה would be derived from שמנה fat, meaning great plenty.

ג „אִם־יִמָּלְאוּ הֶעָבִים גֶּשֶׁם עַל־הָאָרֶץ יָרִיקוּ וְאִם־יִפֹּל עֵץ בַּדָּרוֹם וְאִם בַּצָּפוֹן מְקוֹם שֶׁיִּפֹּל הָעֵץ שָׁם יִהְיֶה"

"Will the clouds be filled with rain? Will they empty themselves over the land? And should it fall (on the) tree in the South or in the North, at the place that it will fall will the tree be there?" 3

Thou canst not be certain even of the most common phenomenon. As, for instance, the much desired rainfall: thy first apprehension is, will the clouds be filled with rain? and if they should, thy next concern is, will the clouds empty themselves over the land where it is needed, or over

the sea where it is superfluous? And should it fall on the land, the concern would be whether it would fall on the trees in the South or North, in the direction where thou hast thy property, or over some property where thou hast no interest. Or, if it develops that the location of the rainfall is established, at that location will it be more clearly defined, that the place where the rain will fall will be where thy tree is? But all this worry is of no benefit, for:

ד „שֹׁמֵר רוּחַ לֹא יִזָּרֵעַ וְרֹאֶה בֶּעָבִים לֹא יִקְצוֹר"

4 "He who watches the wind will not sow, and he who will look at the clouds will not reap".

ה „כַּאֲשֶׁר אֵינְךָ יוֹדֵעַ מַה־דֶּרֶךְ הָרוּחַ כַּעֲצָמִים בְּבֶטֶן הַמְלֵאָה כָּכָה לֹא תֵדַע אֶת־ מַעֲשֵׂה הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אֶת־הַכֹּל"

5 "As thou canst not know the ways of the wind, no more than the personalities in the womb that is full, thus thou canst not know the works of the Lord who hath established all".

It is as impossible for thee to know the laws that govern the wind and what will result therefrom, as it is impossible for thee to determine the nature of the individuals, or personalities, that are in a mother's womb, before they have seen the light of day. That is only one phenomenon, the wind: and as thou canst not know the laws governing the wind, which is the work of God, thus canst thou not know any other of the works of the Lord.

ו „בַּבֹּקֶר זְרַע אֶת־זַרְעֶךָ וְלָעֶרֶב אַל־תַּנַּח יָדֶךָ כִּי אֵינְךָ יוֹדֵעַ אֵי זֶה יִכְשַׁר הֲזֶה אוֹ־זֶה וְאִם־שְׁנֵיהֶם כְּאֶחָד טוֹבִים"

6 "Sow thy seed in the morning, and loosen not thy grasp in the evening; for thou canst not know which will excel, this one or that one, and mayhap the both will be equally good".

Likewise, in thy marital relations, perform thy duty to thy wife later as thou didst earlier in life. Because:

ז „וּמָתוֹק הָאוֹר וְטוֹב לָעֵינַיִם לִרְאוֹת אֶת־הַשָּׁמֶשׁ"

7 "And the light is so sweet, and it is so pleasant to the eyes to see the sun".

Thou owest a duty to the unborn, who is waiting for thee to bring him out of the darkness into the light of the sun.

ח „כִּי אִם־שָׁנִים רַבּוֹת יִחְיֶה הָאָדָם בְּכֻלָּם יִשְׂמָח וְיִזְכֹּר אֶת־יְמֵי הַחֹשֶׁךְ כִּי־הָרְבֵּה
יִהְיוּ כָּל־שֶׁבָּא הָבֶל"

"For should a man live many years, he should be happy with all 8
of them; but let him remember the days of darkness, that they wilt
be many. Everything that came was vain".

No matter how long man may live, no matter under what circumstances, he should always enjoy the present moment; for the future holds darkness before him, and regret for the past is vain.

Therefore:

ט „שְׂמַח בָּחוּר בְּיַלְדוּתֶךָ וִיטִיבְךָ לִבְּךָ בִּימֵי בְחוּרוֹתֶיךָ וְהַלֵּךְ בְּדַרְכֵי לִבֶּךָ וּבְמַרְאֵי
עֵינֶיךָ וְדָע כִּי עַל־כָּל־אֵלֶּה יְבִיאֲךָ הָאֱלֹהִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט"

"Be happy, oh Youth, with thy childhood, and let thy heart be 9
pleased with thy youth, and follow in the ways of thy heart and
in the sight of thine eyes. But know that for all of these will the
Lord bring thee to account".

Enjoy the life. Thou shouldst not be ungrateful and weep over a world full of beauty: for if thou wilt count and improve thy moments, thou wild find each moment one to be happy in; but have in mind that thy pleasures should not be of a character that thou needst be ashamed of, by being untrue to God, or thy fellow men. For the Lord will assuredly bring thee to account for all thy actions and motives.

י „וְהָסֵר כַּעַס מִלִּבֶּךָ וְהַעֲבֵר רָעָה מִבְּשָׂרֶךָ כִּי־הַיַּלְדוּת וְהַשַּׁחֲרוּת הָבֶל"

"And remove vexation from thy heart, so that evil will pass away 10
from thy flesh; for childhood and the morning time of life is Vanity".

Youth and the morning time of life are especially susceptible to vexation and passion: guard thyself against those faults, so that thou wilt not impair thy flesh in thy later days.

## CHAPTER XII

א „וּזְכֹר אֶת־בּוֹרְאֶךָ בִּימֵי בְחוּרֹתֶיךָ עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָבֹאוּ יְמֵי הָרָעָה וְהִגִּיעוּ שָׁנִים אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵין־לִי בָהֶם חֵפֶץ"

1 "But remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, whilst the evil days will not yet have come and the years reached (of which) thou wilt say, »I have no desire in them«".

Before old age will come and approaching dissolution.

ב „עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תֶחְשַׁךְ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהָאוֹר וְהַיָּרֵחַ וְהַכּוֹכָבִים וְשָׁבוּ הֶעָבִים אַחַר הַגָּשֶׁם"

2 "Before the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars shall have become dark, and the clouds will return after the rain".

Before thy sight will have become impaired, and thou wilt no longer enjoy the sight of the sun, the light, the moon, and the stars. Before thy eyes will suffer from cataract, alternately watering and being clouded by a film.

Or it may be translated:

Whilst yet thou wilt not deny the sun, and its curative power will no longer affect thee:

And (whilst yet thou wilt not deny) the light its power to cheer thee;

And whilst yet thou wilt not deny the moon and the stars their power to enchant thee with their magic charm.

ג „בְּיוֹם שָׁיָזֻעוּ שֹׁמְרֵי הַבַּיִת וְהִתְעַוְּתוּ אַנְשֵׁי הֶחָיִל וּבָטְלוּ הַטּוֹחֲנוֹת כִּי מִעֲטוּ וְחָשְׁכוּ הָרֹאוֹת בָּאֲרֻבּוֹת"

3 "In the days when the keepers of the house will tremble, and the men of valour will become crooked, and the grinders will cease because they have been lessened, and those that look through the peepholes will be darkened".

Or it may be translated: and the panes in the windows will have become darkened.

In the days when thy feet will tremble, and thy hands — thy defenders — will have become palsied, and thy teeth will be lessened until thy digestion will have become impaired, and thy senses and intellect will be enfeebled.

ד „וְסָגְרוּ דְלָתַיִם בַּשּׁוק בִּשְׁפַל קוֹל הַטַּחֲנָה וְיָקוּם לְקוֹל הַצִּפּוֹר וְיִשַּׁחוּ כָּל־
בְּנוֹת הַשִּׁיר"

"And the doors to the street will have become closed, by reason of the lowering of the tone of the grinding; and he will arise to the voice of the bird, and all daughters of song will be subdued". 4

On account of the poor digestion and bad assimilation he will suffer from constipation and stricture. He will suffer from insomnia to the extent that a bird will awaken him; and song will become unbearable to him. Also the articulatory as well as auditory organs will have become enfeebled.

ה „גַּם מִגָּבֹהַּ יִירָאוּ וְחַתְחִתִּים בַּדָּרֶךְ וְנָאַץ הַשָּׁקֵד וְיִסְתַּבֵּל חָגָב וְתָפֵר הָאֲבִיּוֹנָה
כִּי־הֹלֵךְ הָאָדָם אֶל־בֵּית עֹלָמוֹ וְסָבְבוּ בַשּׁוק הַסּוֹפְדִים"

"Also the fears from above and the pitfals on the way; and his habits will become despised, and he will be burdened with parasites, and desire will cease. For the man is going to his everlasting home, and the mourners are gathering in the market place." 5

He will suffer from nervousness, and fear the danger from above and be unsure of his steps on the road. He will become uncleanly and despicable in his habits (Examples נאצו את קדוש ישראל "They have despised the Holy One of Israel"; מקל שקד אני רואה "a persistent rod do I see" or שקדתי על דלתותיך יום יום). And he will be unable to take care of himself. He will be burdened with parasites in his clothing, body, hair of his head and beard; and all desire will have left him. All those are signs of his impending dissolution, and one can almost see the mourners gathering.*

ו „עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יֵרָתֵק חֶבֶל הַכֶּסֶף וְתָרֻץ גֻּלַּת הַזָּהָב וְתִשָּׁבֵר כַּד עַל־הַמַּבּוּעַ וְנָרֹץ
הַגַּלְגַּל אֶל־הַבּוֹר"

"Whilst yet the silver cord will not have become loosened, and the golden bowl shattered, and the pitcher become broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the well". 6

* האבינה: the father of cheats, or the chief illusion, Love.

Before thy nervous system will lose its tone.

Before thy metabolism, the functions of thy involuntary organs in thy viscera (which is likened unto a golden bowl) will have been disturbed;

Before thy kidneys and bladder (which is likened to a pitcher) will cease to properly function. And:

Before the peristaltic action will cease (which is likened to the wheel being broken at the cistern).

ז „וְיָשֹׁב הֶעָפָר עַל־הָאָרֶץ כְּשֶׁהָיָה וְהָרוּחַ תָּשׁוּב אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר נְתָנָהּ"

7 "And the dust will return to the Earth as it was, and the spirit will return to the Lord that gave it".

THIS ENDS THE LECTURE.

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## EPILOGUE

ה „הֶבֶל הֲבָלִים אָמַר הַקּוֹהֶלֶת הַכֹּל הָבֶל"

Vanity of Vanities, said the Lecturer, 8
All is Vanity.

This Epilogue was written by the sages as an apology and a reason for placing this Lecture among the canonical books of the Scripture. The Epilogue was evidently not part of the Book of Qoheleth when it was issued, but in the form of a fragment, referring to the Book of Qoheleth by the refrain that runs through the book: "Vanity of Vanities".

First they tell about the author:

ט „וְיֹתֵר שֶׁהָיָה קֹהֶלֶת חָכָם עוֹד לִמַּד־דַּעַת אֶת־הָעָם וְאִזֵּן וְחִקֵּר תִּקֵּן מְשָׁלִים הַרְבֵּה"

"More than the fact that Qoheleth was wise: he even taught the 9
people knowledge; and he made them listen and caused them to
investigate. He founded many parables".

Then they speak about the Book and its purpose:

י „בִּקֵּשׁ קֹהֶלֶת לִמְצֹא דִבְרֵי־חֵפֶץ וְכָתוּב יָשָׁר דִּבְרֵי אֱמֶת"

"Qoheleth wished to find what should be desired, and the words 10
of truth were impartially written".

Qoheleth wished to find a specific formula for life, and he treated that subject fairly and impartially.

יא „דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים כַּדָּרְבָנוֹת וּכְמַשְׁמְרוֹת נְטוּעִים בַּעֲלֵי אֲסָפוֹת נִתְּנוּ מֵרֹעֶה אֶחָד"

"The words of the wise are like unto goads or driven nails; 11
heads of chapters developed from one idea".

Wise man are not profuse in their statements; but just as the goad will drive the animal in any direction by a slight tug towards that course, thus the hint that the wise man gives leads to a whole field of conjecture; and like a nail driven, let us say, on the top of a table to its base, though that nail occupies a very small space, yet it influences the entire table, thus

a mere word spoken by the wise cannot be used as the word itself without taking the entire Lecture in consideration. The words of the wise are like heads of chapters: general statements containing much detail, very concisely uttered: as for instance "וירא אליו ד' באלוני ממרא" "And the Lord appeared before him (Abraham) in the plains of Mamre", which is the heading of the chapter: the details of the appearance of the Lord to Abraham are related by what follows, about the three angels that visited him.

The entire book has one central predominating idea, to which all the rest converge or point.

יב "וְיֹתֵר מֵהֵמָּה בְּנִי הִזָּהֵר עֲשׂוֹת סְפָרִים הַרְבֵּה אֵין קֵץ וְלַהַג הַרְבֵּה יְגִעַת בָּשָׂר"

12 "And besides these, my son, be careful, the making of many endless books and much talk wearies the flesh".

Besides taking into consideration the foregoing, be exceedingly careful, my son, not to form false conclusions, because endless books would be required to give a complete mirror of the author's mind. And shouldst thou ask me: since one may be prone to error by making a false construction, would it not be better to elaborate? Our answer is: too much talk wearies the flesh: conciseness is interesting, while redundancy is wearying.

יג "סוֹף דָּבָר הַכֹּל נִשְׁמָע אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים יְרָא וְאֶת־מִצְוֹתָיו שְׁמוֹר כִּי־זֶה כָּל־הָאָדָם"

13 "The end of the matter, after all is heard:
Fear the Lord and obey his precepts: for this is all of man".

No matter how many books would be written, it would not change the author's final specific, which is to fear the Lord and obey His precepts; for this final specific is what we are seeking for.

יד "כִּי אֶת־כָּל־מַעֲשֶׂה הָאֱלֹהִים יָבִא בְּמִשְׁפָּט עַל כָּל־נֶעְלָם אִם־טוֹב וְאִם־רָע"

14 "Because for all deeds, whether good or bad, will the Lord bring in judgment in a most mysterious way".

Transpose sentence to read: כי את כל מעשה אם טוב ואם רע האלהים יבא במשפט על כל נעלם.

We will point out the final specific, which is in Chapter 11, Paragraph 9, of this Book: "But know, that for all of these will the Lord bring thee to account" or judgment — for thy good deeds, as well as for thy bad deeds; and verily He doeth so and He will do so, in a way too mysterious for us to determine the reward or punishment following a specific act.